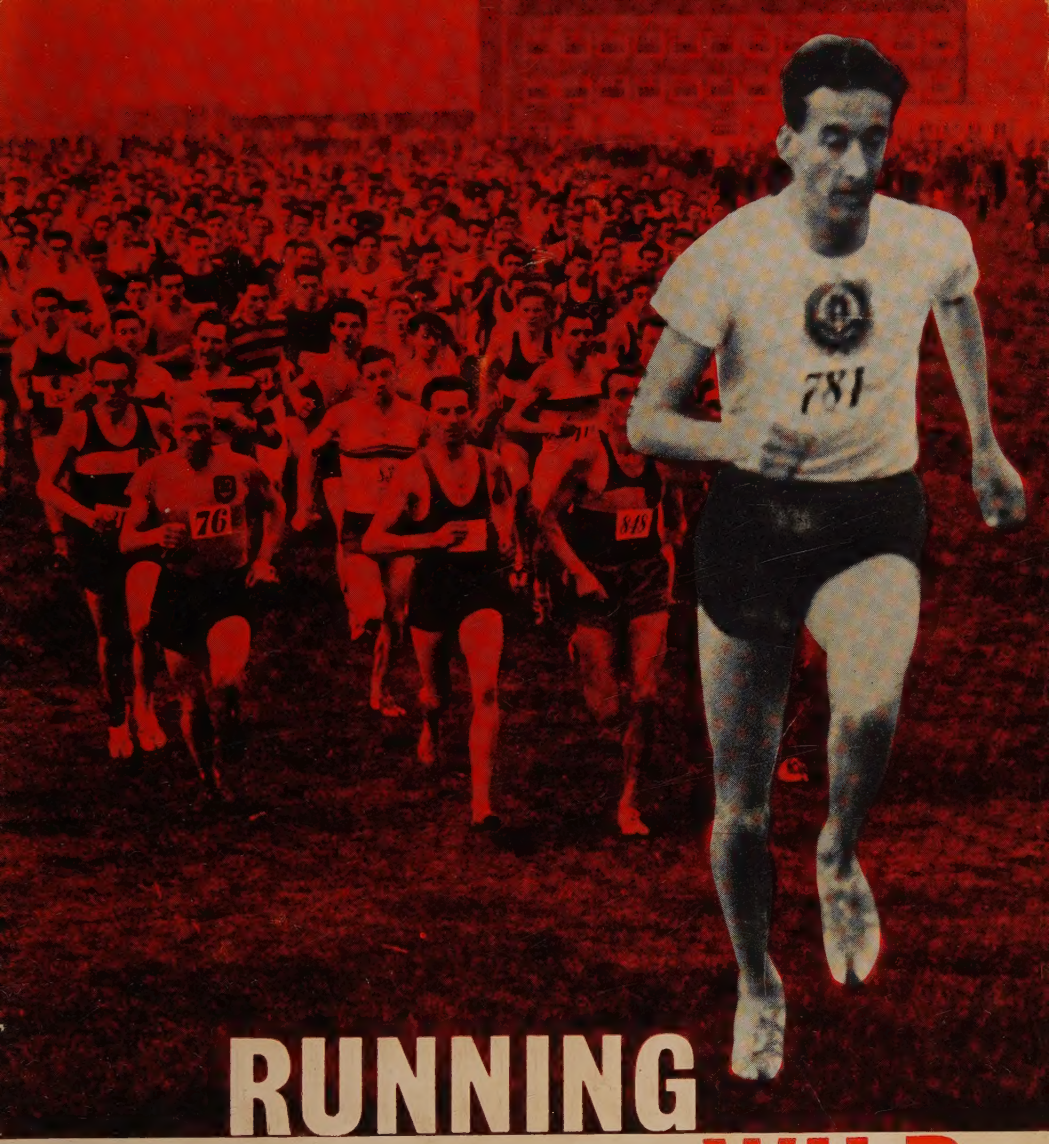

RUNNING WILD

Gordon Pirie

HIS OWN STORY

Running Wild

GORDON PIRIE

GORDON PIRIE is not only one of the greatest runners Britain has ever produced, but the most controversial. He has fought every inch of the long, long trail not only for his achievements, but for his original point of view about physical training.

Now, after a longer career than any other international champion of his day, Pirie retires from the track and tells his story. As you would expect, it bristles with argument about his fellow athletes and about athletics all over the world. Pirie has been the whipping boy of sports writers and officials for many years. Now it is his turn to answer back.

But there is far more than controversy in this book. It is a moving record of single-minded dedication, of tremendous struggle to achieve, and of sacrifice for an ideal, for the author reveals the athlete's agonising fight against his own reluctant mind and body, and the ordeal of the champion, cheered on by thousands, but dreadfully alone as he forces his body beyond the barrier of human endurance.

W. H. ALLEN

21s *net*

RUNNING WILD

GORDON PIRIE

Running Wild

W. H. ALLEN
LONDON
1961

To
Waldemar Gerschler

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Chapter 1

MY CRITICS

I HAVE been ten years at the top as an international athlete—longer than any of my contemporaries, despite great financial and physical difficulties. This is not a boast, but a simple fact that can be checked from the records. During these ten years I have had a fair share of praise for certain achievements and have made many loyal friends among the general public; but I have also had far more than my share of unfair and often savage criticism.

One of the favourite, but by no means most abusive, words applied to me is Big-head. There are others beginning with B. Now I have retired, with a cellar full of tarnished trophies, and it is time to look back—and answer back.

First I ask myself why it is that I seem to have been so often involved in controversy when all I wanted was to get on with my job of giving all I had to athletics. At this rather solemn moment for me of saying goodbye to the competitive field, I have had a long and earnest look at myself, summoning up all the honesty and impartiality I could muster. I have come to the conclusion that my clashes with authority, with the self-appointed critics of athletics, and sometimes with the public, were due to the fact that my ideals, my aims, my training methods and even my physical equipment, differed from those of most of my British contemporaries. I have often trodden a lone path and so have been called conceited, awkward, self-opinionated, rebellious—even a bad sport. This book may put the record straight by telling just what I have tried to do, and how, and why.

Before settling down to write this, I waded through hundreds and hundreds of cuttings about myself in a newspaper library. It was a blistering experience. I could not recognize myself in the mass of

opinions so easily expressed and so wide of the mark. The image presented to the public was not me. The athlete should have a hide like a hippo if he is to have any peace of mind. He should be able to shrug off the most outrageous opinions. I am afraid I have never been able to do that. Perhaps I am too sensitive even now, after ten years. I have been deeply hurt on many occasions by reports which misrepresented me, and these reports have often upset my athletic form and my mental concentration. I could quote you many instances not only from my own record, but from those of other athletes who have similarly suffered. Some runners have been so bitterly discouraged and disillusioned that they have given up the game in disgust. I nearly did so several times. Yet these critics who write so glibly, in most cases with no idea whatever of an athlete's life, are not bad fellows. They are not often malicious or deliberately unkind. Most of them just don't know the facts, won't take the trouble to find out, and, when they are wrong, would rather die than admit it.

On the other hand, every British amateur athlete wears an invisible gag. He dare not break into print, even if he could get his views printed, because he would be branded as a professional. Only if he gets express permission to earn some of his heavy expenses by writing or broadcasting can he do so. And you may be sure he will not get permission if officialdom suspects that his views are not safe and conventional. A few favourites have been allowed to write, but their views were generally too tame to be interesting. Apart from writing for the Press, a top athlete must be most careful what he says at all times, especially just before and after a race. At these times he is highly strung and overwrought. If he refuses to talk he may make enemies and be called ungracious or surly. If he talks he is in danger of finding his words misunderstood. Before a race his most objective statement of aims may be presented as a boast, especially if those aims are not immediately realized. For example, all my competitive life I have been dogged by statements that I intended to attack records, when I had no such intention and when conditions obviously made such attempts absurd.

After a race an athlete's innocent remark about his performance can be made to look like an excuse for not doing better. So he learns to keep his mouth buttoned up if he can. And that, to the critics, is being uncooperative. Athletes need better public relations, and officials could do a great deal for the sport if they undertook to provide them. As it is, the individual often finds that he is alone and un-

supported in an unsympathetic world. There is nobody to put his point of view. He has no trade union, no Jimmy Hill or Danny Blanchflower.

I am often asked what is wrong with British athletics, and reams are written on the subject without getting down to the truth. Yet all agree we are in the doldrums. In this book I am going to tell the truth as I see it, without fear or favour. There is no chip on my shoulder. I have had a grand career and enjoyed it to the full; but there is no getting away from the fact that many British athletes are disgruntled and discouraged. Now I can put their point of view across to anyone who cares to read it. The gag is off at last.

There is nothing wrong with young British athletes. They are as good as any in the world and better than most. We have a wonderful array of brilliant youngsters coming on. But if I am asked what is wrong with British athletics I must honestly reply, "Plenty—in fact, almost everything."

Before I get down to justifying such opinions I should like in this opening chapter to explain myself. I think I have the right of reply, and what I have to say should be taken seriously by all who love athletics. It goes to the heart of the matter.

1. In the past ten years I have sacrificed everything—including my private life and my future prospects—to a ruthless and single-minded determination to get the maximum out of my body and to WIN RACES. And I have dared to incite others to do the same. Such a programme is bound to make an athlete a marked man because it conflicts with the whole history, tradition and organization, of British amateurism which puts 'playing the game' first and winning a bad second.

2. I have conducted a one-man crusade to bridge the mental and physical gap between British athletic attitudes and world standards. I have always considered the world best, and not the British best, as my goal. I have constantly urged British athletes to set themselves the highest aims so that they could be on equal terms with the world. British isolationism has been so long accepted in sport that we are now isolated from the world revolution that has taken place in the past ten years. That applies to many fields besides athletics.

3. My inflexible will to train to the physical limit, far in excess of what was considered safe, reasonable and socially desirable, has involved me in misunderstandings with officials and critics who still

regard such dedication as slightly un-British and certainly damned ungentlemanly.

My aim has been to win, first against myself and my reluctant body, and secondly against the best athletes, not by stopwatch timing but IN RACES.

4. I have been called another B—a Bolshie—because I have pointed out that to beat foreign athletes we have got to give more and more of ourselves in harder and harder training. Heaven knows how I hate the way sport is ruled in countries where the State is all and the individual nothing. But that has not blinded me to the advantages that State athletes enjoy compared with those in Britain, or the need for a radical change in this country.

5. I believe—and I have never hesitated to say so—that the government of athletics in Britain is totally undemocratic in structure and completely unrepresentative of the views of performing athletes. This state of affairs is a scandal which must be tackled if Britain is to hold up her head abroad.

6. From my earliest days I have seen through the sham of amateurism in Britain, based as it still is on the Old School Tie and the Old Pals Act. I want to see athletics free—free to produce many great, uninhibited athletes instead of so many popular, part-time playboys who shoot up for a few seasons like rockets and then fade out because they won't give up the 'good life' to do a little better. Amateurism, as Britain understands it, is the great handicap which our athletes always carry. It prevents them financially, physically and mentally, from giving their best.

7. I believe that British training methods, based as they are on false ideals, tend to produce the wrong sort of athletes, badly trained and inhibited.

8. I believe it is necessary for a champion, now that world competition is so fierce, to adopt fitness as a whole way of life, with physical development to a degree yet undreamt of in this country. I shall explain fully what I mean in my chapter on training. My way of life has prevented me from being a good mixer.

9. Perhaps the greatest offence I have committed in the eyes of the elderly dictators of British athletics is to be an individual with a challenging point of view instead of a docile performer for the benefit of gate money.

10. I have always believed that if a man or woman is prepared to be

dedicated to athletics, the sport should in some way provide him or her with a reasonable living free of humiliating patronage.

I suppose it is not surprising that one with these prickly points of view has been involved in controversy. My relations with press and broadcasting became strained as far back as 1953 when I first won some fame. During that season I ran two world records, and these exploits were over-publicized. A flattering picture was built up of me quite out of proportion to what I had done. I was presented as a phenomenon and a world-beater, whereas I knew I still had a long way to go. Any efforts on my part to correct the picture were regarded as false modesty. I knew that I then ranked only third or fourth among long-distance runners. The trouble about an unrealistic build-up of reputation is that you are absurdly expected to do something wonderful every time you turn out; if you fail, even for a day, you are written off as finished. I suffered this fate many times. The commonest complaint against me was that I trained too hard. Again and again the prophets told the world that I was killing myself, even though they had no idea what my schedule was. They merely knew that it was a lot more strenuous than those of other athletes, and this alone made me unpopular. I was actually trying too hard.

From 1953 I trained extremely hard, and I produced form at the beginning of 1954 both in races and training that would have ensured my success at the European championships in Berne. In fact I achieved in training a time superior to the world record for the 5,000 m, ran a world record for the grass-track mile, and broke a bone in my foot, all in June, 1954. Then I ran into a barrage of criticism which made out that I was a loud-mouthed, big-headed personality who did nothing with his legs to support his boasts. From then on, every time I stepped on to the track it was heralded as a 'world-record attempt', although I never made such claims. The most ridiculous occasion was in July, 1955, at Croydon, where, despite a gale, press and television turned up to see me attack the 3-mile record. Of course I should have needed a motor-bike to stand any chance, but the headlines followed—'Pirie fails'. In the same year, when I collapsed in the AAA 6-mile race I was accused of bad sportsmanship because, when I was under the impression that I had won, I did not congratulate Ken Norris. And so it went on.

This curious campaign came to a head in January, 1956, when I was invited to a cocktail party to receive the Sportsman of the Year

Trophy which had been voted to me the previous year. The sports writers had not invited me to their annual dinner when they entertain the six personalities they nominate as the best sportsmen of the year. But in the popular ballot of readers of the sporting press I had come out top of the list, a great honour which I sincerely appreciated. So, when I went to receive the award I was obviously not the darling of the critics. But they were all there. It was a dress-suit affair at the Savoy, with TV cameras glaring and flash-bulbs popping. Should I have turned the other cheek and let bygones be bygones? Should I have meekly taken the award, mumbled a few sporting platitudes and departed? Many people thought afterwards that I should. Well, I didn't. And, looking back, I don't regret the few blunt words I spoke. I reminded the critics how out of touch with popular opinion they seemed to be. I recalled, too, that they had been telling me for two years that I was finished and burned out as an athlete. I said I was still going strong and that such attacks as I had been subjected to did great damage to the sport. Of course I expressed due gratitude for the honour the trophy did me, but I made it clear that I had won it in spite of the critics. There was a sensation, a murmur of surprise and consternation. I had put my foot in it. After what I said I couldn't expect much mercy. So unsportsmanlike of me, wasn't it? Well, it was one of the rare moments of truth.

The attacks continued and it would be wearisome to detail them. But one story I feel bound to refute appeared on September 7, 1956. The headline was, 'I don't want to run for Britain'. It was a complete fabrication. I was supposed to have quarrelled with the British Board because I wasn't allowed to run in Bergen, and to have told them that I was determined to emigrate where I could take my sport easily and not be pushed around. This was such a flagrant invention that it was even denied by the Board, who said there was no dissension between them and me, that I had accepted the decision not to go to Bergen without the slightest ill-will and had made no complaints. It is very rare for anyone to come to my rescue as the Board did in this case.

It is difficult for an amateur athlete, unless he has private means, to meet the press boys on equal terms. I remember once talking to one of the top writers, who was generally believed to earn £8,000 a year. Good luck to him. But that very day I had been forced to give up running on a convenient track because I couldn't afford to fork out the two-guinea fee requested.

I have never relied on promoters or the press for my future. Perhaps I was foolish not to court them a little since they are so powerful. They can make or break an athlete. But I couldn't butter them up without changing my whole character and so sacrificing my aims. Thus, the adverse publicity I got was inevitable.

As most sports fans know, my idol as an athlete was always Zatopek. I so often lauded Zatopek that some people thought I had him on the brain. Well, seven years after I had first seen Zatopek run I realized my greatest ambition by beating him. That was in October, 1955. To sum up this chapter on me and my critics I can't do better than quote what one kind journalist, John Fairgrieve, wrote about me the day after that event:

"Did you make a mental apology," he asked, "to Gordon Pirie yesterday? You were probably just one of the thousands if you did, just one of those who called him a big-head, a windbag, a good distance runner, but never, never a great one.

"Just one of those who said he would be left floundering by Zatopek, the Iron Man; who watched the race on television and laughed as Zatopek fought off those early Pirie challenges; and who gasped with a delighted but belated burst of pride as Pirie turned on that fantastic sprint in the last lap of the race that few men would dare to attempt.

"Before his victory over Zatopek, that ultimate triumph, Pirie knew disappointments bitter as gall, disappointments that were never tempered by public sympathy. Remember how he collapsed that sultry summer evening a few months ago.

"He had flogged his stringy body to the utmost and it had let his spirit down. That was probably Gordon Pirie's worst hour and he endured it alone.

"And he came back as no one less dedicated could have come back.

"Pirie was never a Gay Gordon and never will be. In his frightening, ruthless grind to the top he has never had time for anything else.

"Some people said he never had time for sportsmanship either. If they meant he didn't like losing they were right. He aimed to be the best long-distance runner on earth and that sort of objective has no room for defeat.

"Now he is the best . . ."

Chapter 2

THE INSPIRATION OF ZATOPEK AND GERSCHLER

My first memory of Olympics dates back to the Wembley Games of 1948. I was 17, and it was then that my imagination was set on fire and my consuming ambition was born. I ran with my father, an ex-international and Scottish cross-country runner, to help carry the torch to Wembley Stadium. As I waited that sunny morning so long ago I shook with excitement. Then, when my father put the torch into my hand, as if symbolically passing on the great spirit of a champion to the next generation, I was surprised to find it was hot. I ran through the cheering crowds at Reigate, Surrey, and the flame seemed to draw my very soul on to the start of a great journey down the years. It was the start, too, of a personal crusade to make British athletics match up to the best in the world.

But the event of those Games which really set the seal on my ambitions was the running of Emil Zatopek. I instantly recognized him as the embodiment of an ideal for myself as I saw him scorch through the 10,000-m field. From that day he has never ceased to be my greatest inspiration and challenge and my firm friend. My whole life was focused on the resolve to beat him. And one day I did. Zatopek was a phenomenon and an all-time great. That year at Wembley he burst through a mental and physical barrier. He showed runners that what they had been content with up to then was nothing to what could be achieved. They called him the human locomotive. Instead of accepting him as a challenge many critics tried to explain him away as a freak. They said that at that pace he would burn up in a year. Yet, six years later Zatopek did his best-ever performances and achieved world records in the 5,000 and 10,000 m.

Zatopek upset British athletes because of the intensity of his training,

his devotion and dedication, his amazing courage. He showed the critics who were constantly telling young athletes to go easy for fear of killing themselves, that what they needed to excel was more and more study, more and more training, and more and more discipline and courage. Not many were prepared to follow along that hard path.

Since that day in 1948 there has been no place in my thoughts for anything that conflicted with my ideal, embodied in Zatopek. I have run where I wanted and mostly when I wanted, except when forced to toe the line by officials who didn't share my ideals. I do not agree with the frequent taunt I hear about myself—that I have a one-track mind. On the contrary, I am interested in everything in the world about me. So, of course, is Zatopek, as I shall tell. If ever there was an all-round man it is Emil.

Zatopek's example was mainly responsible for the revolution in training which has taken place in the past ten years. But there has been no comparable revolution in the attitude of the governing bodies of athletics. Before Zatopek dazzled us like a sunburst it was considered ample for an athlete to train two or three times a week and to lead an ordinary, non-athletic life between. Zatopek showed us that it was essential to train two or three times each day, and every day, to reach our best.

I well remember the atmosphere of the athletes' dressing rooms long ago. My father believed in daily training—he generally did 10 miles a day—and he tactfully led my two brothers and myself to set ourselves relatively high targets. But the training that many of those great-hearted athletes gave themselves seems laughable to a long-distance runner of today. Oh, that stinking embrocation in which they all believed, as if the more it stank the more good it did them! Oh, that massage, regarded as an essential, yet generally so inexpertly administered by untrained coaches that it was no better than slap and tickle! Oh, those cork grips to hang on to while running! Many of those stalwarts did not even regard running as an essential. Their routine was a brisk walk, a jog of perhaps a ½-mile, a couple of sprints and a dose of salts. Then they were ready for anything. The old school were firmly convinced that it was specially dangerous for a youngster to exhaust himself. Take it easy was the universal advice.

So, it was four years after Wembley that I worked up to the sort of training that Zatopek was doing. Then I discovered for myself

that the body automatically limits the exertion you can subject it to, for exhaustion sets in and stops you. Only slowly can you raise the level and postpone the exhaustion point. Zatopek ran 20 to 30 miles every day, and I got into the habit of doing the same at Tooting Bec track. I was often turned out before I had finished because they wanted to close the grounds.

A mistake many young runners make is to copy the training schedule of a champion. I believe if some stars ran on their hands you would find other people doing the same. Every runner must evolve his own schedule and methods, otherwise he will never reach the top. I never copied Zatopek's schedule of training. But I adopted his attitude and ideas, and satisfied myself that his method of long, hard and frequent training was right for me too.

The next landmark in my life was my meeting with Waldemar Gerschler, the great German coach, after the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. I was immediately impressed with the quiet authority of this man, and soon I unreservedly put myself in his hands. I have regarded him as my mentor, my inspiration and my close friend, ever since. He is Director of Physical Education at Freiburg University, which I have visited many times. For twenty years he has worked closely with Professor Hans Reindell, a heart specialist, and with psychological experts. These two men and their team have built up the Freiburg Institute into one of the greatest scientific research centres for athletes in the world. I could write a book about them and their work; to summarize their achievement, I should say that they proved that athletes could set themselves targets which had never been dared before. By the most rigorous physical and mental tests of every athlete they advised, they discovered his ultimate potential and showed him how to reach it by harder and harder and harder training. Their work on an athlete's breathing alone would entitle them to lasting fame. So would their methods of testing an athlete's concentration. They put me through trials I thought I could never survive. But I did. They knew exactly what they were doing.

Gerschler is an unassuming, modest man as most great personalities are. His wife was German high-jump champion at the age of 39, and they lead a very happy family life. Gerschler was the first man who ever suggested that I could do MORE than I was trying to do. He has never told me how to run a race. That is for the athlete to decide. But he told me how to produce the maximum effort. His effect on me

was to take from my shoulders the enormous responsibility for training which I had so far borne alone. I didn't know what I was doing until I met him.

Under Gerschler's guidance I soon realized that the training of the mind is as important as physical training. The essence of success is endless repetition without boredom, and a technique for heightening mental, as well as physical, tension.

The first essential is to teach the athlete to enjoy the basic exercise of running by being uninhibited in movement and thought. He will then revel in the mere rhythm of running and never tire of it. If this sounds simple I can assure you it is the hardest barrier of all for a young athlete to surmount, and many never do. This liberated condition is one which you have to experience to appreciate. I can't describe it any more exactly. When it has been achieved the rest comes relatively easily.

But, however much an athlete may rely on coaches, he alone can say ultimately why he won or why he failed: he should not rely on anybody else's judgment. And after a failure it often takes a big mental effort to face the reasons honestly. I made it a habit to search for the reason after any setback, particularly the big ones. There must always be a reason when a champion loses a race at his speciality. Sometimes it is easy to find; sometimes difficult. But I can honestly say I have never yet had a completely unexplained failure. More than once I have found the reason and then proved myself right by turning the tables a week or so later on the man who beat me. A champion does not need excuses. He searches for facts to explain, not excuse.

I have also been misunderstood because I claimed that by rigorous training results could be achieved far beyond the accepted standards. For example, I was ridiculed in this country and overseas in 1953, when the world record for 5,000 m was 13 min 58·2 s, for declaring my intention of doing it in 13 min 40 s. But I proved it could be done. I had the same attitude to the other distance races. In 1950 the accepted highest standards in England for 1 mile, 2 miles, 3 miles and 6 miles were about 4 min 10 s, 9 min 20 s, 14 min 30 s and 31 min, respectively. For anyone to do more than these times was considered out of this world. Considering the dismally low standard of British athletics in the immediate post-war years, I was not satisfied with what was considered excellent. Looking at these figures in a highly critical way I compared them with the world records, which were then:

1 mile: 4 min 1·4 s
2 miles: 8 min 42·6 s
3 miles: 13 min 32·4 s
6 miles: 28 min 30·8 s

Why, I asked myself, should not British runners achieve these times and even better them? I decided to make my standard not the British best but the world's best. I now say categorically that I have done what I set out to do in athletics—to bridge the gap between British and world standards so that we need never again accept inferiority. I have done so by setting up these times, all of which, as you can see, are better than the world records which existed when I was a youngster:

1 mile: 3 min 59·9 s
*2 miles: 8 min 26·0 s
*3 miles: 13 min 8·0 s
6 miles: 28 min 9·6 s

Let me now risk bringing down a fresh outburst of ridicule on my head by predicting that in the next ten years world athletes will make the times I have given look slow. Here are the times I confidently expect:

½ mile: 1 min 40 s
(present best by Tom Courtney USA, 1 min 46·8 s)
1 mile: 3 min 40s
(present best by Herb Elliott, 3 min 54·5 s)
2 miles: 8 min 15 s
(present best by Albert Thomas, Australia, 8 min 32 s)
3 miles: 12 min 45 s
(present best by Albert Thomas, 13 min 10·8 s)
6 miles: 26 min 30 s
(present best by Sandor Iharos, Hungary, 27 min 43·8 s)

To translate these into metre equivalents, here is my list:

800 m: 1 min 39·7 s
(present best by Roger Moens, Belgium, 1 min 45·7 s)
1,500 m: 3 min 23 s
(present best by Herb Elliott, 3 min 35·6 s)

*Metre-equivalent bests.

3,000 m: 7 min 45 s
(present best by Gordon Pirie, 7 min 52·8 s)
5,000 m: 13 min 12 s
(present best by Vladimir Kuts, USSR, 13 min 35 s)
10,000 m: 27 min 35s
(present best by Bolotnikov, USSR, 28 min 18·8 s)

The reader may be surprised to hear a man who has competed in three Olympic Games for his country and broken umpteen records say that he is not, and never has been, a 'natural' athlete.

Perhaps more than anything else it is this fact which has forced me to adopt individual methods of training. I have never been able to pull out a dazzling performance almost without training or with only a minimum of preliminary effort, as many British athletes have done in the past, particularly at short distances.

I am long, thin and rangy. Traditionally, distance runners are stocky and heavily muscled. I think I have proved that my sort of physique is not necessarily a disadvantage, but it has imposed on me a necessity to be fighting fit all the time. If I had trained like so many of my contemporaries I should never have won world records. For any period of let-up in my rigid discipline I have had to pay in months of still harder training to fight my way back. I have often envied the good-time athlete who—for a brief career, mind you—can train almost with a tankard of beer in his hand. My physique as well as my ambition has imposed a permanent regime of self-denial which I have now accepted as the natural way to physical fitness as well as to athletic prowess. I have imposed on myself diet rules which are not a brief denial, but which I believe are the way to a long life and to the fullest enjoyment of the human body and its marvellous senses. I certainly shan't throw away all this acquired wisdom now I have retired.

So, you see that, though I am no crank or killjoy, I have never been at home in the cocktail bar, nor have I played at the politics of athletics. Believe me, for intrigue and venom the internal politics and behind-the-scenes manoeuvres of the game are a revelation of human silliness.

In the ten years I have been at it the athletic scene has changed fundamentally. The standard of performance in every country has risen to such tremendous peaks that we are now approaching what appear to be the limits of physical achievement. I am sure that greater

and greater feats will yet be performed but they will be measured in fractions of seconds and inches, not in sudden incredible leaps forward as in the past. This will put Britain at an ever greater disadvantage unless we abandon the traditions of so-called amateurism.

Very few doctors and scientists have studied health, let alone the highest manifestation of it in the athlete. Most doctors are too busy combating the evils of civilized life. It is a strange thought that my brother Peter and I, both a few years later British champion athletes, were turned down when we were boys as physically unfit to be evacuated to Canada. That was during the war, when there was a scheme to get a quota of British children to safety. We were regarded as underdeveloped. The doctors had no way of testing character, concentration and the will to win. How many doctors even know what physical fitness is? They rarely see it and they have no time to study it. An athlete with the ideal of physical perfection in action is fenced off from the public on a track and regarded as a freak, a phenomenon or another species like an animal in the Zoo.

Fitness is a challenge, and because of the strange apathy of people in general the challenge is greater than it needs to be. One must overcome the physical resistance and the psychological burden imposed by the lazy ones who will not bestir themselves to a minimum, let alone a maximum, effort. The athlete has to torture the body, for it will only respond to the same degree as the stimulus applied. Greatest athletes in their greatest races run themselves blind. The body is plunged into the depths of exhaustion and the mind into depths of despair. Championship fitness is a terrific test of a man's or a woman's character and physique to the absolute limits. You must be a 'killer', never giving up till the last ounce has been wrung out of your inadequate body.

Many athletes who wished me well never thought that someone with my physique would get to the top in distance running. I just wasn't the type, they said. For example, when I broke Wooderson's 3-mile record he told me he knew his record would go some day but he never expected me to beat it. Gaston Reiff said just the same when I broke the 5,000-m world record. They did not make allowance for my mental attitude. My development, too, has been the exact reverse of that traditionally accepted up to then. It was usual for a young runner to do his best in shorter distances and to go in for longer and longer distances as he got older. I began as a cross-country runner and eventually tackled the mile, running under 4 minutes at the age of 29. This shows

you can do what you set yourself to do—a case of mind over matter.

Another misfortune I had to face, which few other champions experienced, was to break bones in my feet twice, in 1954 and again in 1961, as well as other serious injuries over the years. Both fractures threatened to put me out of racing permanently, and they set back my ambitions and training disastrously so that I had almost to start all over again after a long struggle to get fit. These periods may, in the long run, have strengthened my will-power, for I was terribly tempted to give up. But I survived them and came back to win new records each time.

Chapter 3

TRAINING SCHEDULES FOR BIG EVENTS

It is odd that those people who constantly told me I was doing too much training had no idea what I was doing. Fred Wilt, the American champion, in a book called *How They Train*, got hold of a schedule which he claimed was typical of my training. He didn't get it from me. Chris Brasher, reviewing the book, wrote that the figures of my training should be taken with a pinch of salt since anyone who attempted such training, including me, would be in hospital within a week. Actually I was doing at that time twice as much as Wilt said I was.

Let's take an actual and typical day of training in 1956.

First Session (10 a.m.)

½-hour warm-up in track suit.
10 minutes' gymnastics.
In spikes and shorts ran ½ mile in 1 min 56 s.
Jogged for 10 minutes.
Ran 2 miles in 8 min 46·6 s (incidentally, until 1952 no British athlete had beaten 9 min).
Ran 4 × ½ mile, average time 2 min 8 s, interspersed with one-lap jog.
'Warm-down' with 15 minutes' jogging.
Lunch 1.15 p.m.

Second Session (6 p.m.)

½-hour warm-up.
Ran 10 × ¼ mile (average time, 61 s; best time, 58 s).
Interspersed with 300 yds easy running.
Ran easy for 15 minutes to finish off.

This sort of routine I did day after day, and the above was by no means the hardest. Often I did a ½ hour of weight-lifting before going on the track.

But a sample day, or even a week, is not enough to give the picture of my training methods. A month is needed to show how I worked up to my highest performances. Here is a brief summary of my programme for the four weeks which led up to my world 3,000-m record on September 4, 1956.

August 3. 6 p.m. 8 × 440 yds. Average 60 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 4. 11 a.m. 4 × ¾ mile. Average time 3 min 11 s.
Interval jogs 440 yds.
6 p.m. 15 × 440 yds. Average 61·5 s.
Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 5. Rest and travelling to Freiburg, Germany.

August 6. Treadmill exercises to exhaustion in Gerschler's clinic.

August 7. 12.30 p.m. 50 minutes' strong running.
6 p.m. 1¼ hours, including 4 × 1½ miles fast in the forest.

August 8. 12 noon. 10 × 440 yds. 59 s average. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 9. 9 a.m. ½-hour run in boots.
1 p.m. 8 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 7 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.
7 p.m. 6 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 6 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

August 10. 12.30 p.m. 10 × 440 yds. Average 62 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 11. 11 a.m. 6 × ¾ mile. Average 3 min 16 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.
6 p.m. 8 × 440 yds. Average 58·5 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 12. 11 a.m. 4 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 5 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.
6 p.m. 8 × 220 yds. Average 26 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 13. 1 p.m. 4 × 440 yds. Average 56 s.
6 p.m. 2 × ½ mile, 1 min 56·1 s and 1 min 57·6 s. Interval ½-mile jog.

August 14. 4 p.m. 40-minute run.

August 15. 12.5 p.m. 35 minutes' fast-and-slow running.
6 p.m. 2-mile race in 8 min 42·6 s.

August 16. 12.45 p.m. 3 × ½ mile and 3 × ¾ mile in 2 min 8 s and 3 min 12 s respectively.
6.30 p.m. 3 × ½ mile and 3 × ¾ mile, times as in midday training.

August 17. 12.30 p.m. 15 × 400 m. Average 62·6 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 18. Rest and travelling.

August 19. 11 a.m. ¾ mile, 3 min 12 s. 1 mile 4 min 21 s. ¾ mile 3 min 15 s.

August 20. 12.30 p.m. 6 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 3 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

6 p.m. 6 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 4 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

August 21. 12.30 p.m. 4 × ¾ mile. Average 3 min 12 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

6.30 p.m. ½-hour run and weight-lifting.

August 22. 12.30 p.m. 8 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 9·5 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

6.30 p.m. 10 × 440 yds. Average 61 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

August 23. 12.30 p.m. 5 × ¾ mile. Average 3 min 16 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

August 24. 12.30 p.m. 15 × 440 yds. Average 62·5 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

7.30 p.m. 20-minute run.

August 25. 5 p.m. 16 × 330 yds. Average 46 s.

August 26. Day lost, had my car stolen.

August 27. 12.30 p.m. 25-minute run in heavy rain.

6.30 p.m. 25 × 220 yds. Average 27·5 s. Interval jogs 220 yds.

August 28. 12.30 p.m. 4 × ½ mile. Average 2 min 6 s. Interval jogs 440 yds.

6.30 p.m. 3,000 m in 8 min 40 s.

August 29. 12.30 p.m. 40 minutes' fast-and-slow.

6 p.m. 20-minute jog.

August 30. 12.30 p.m. 40 minutes' fast-and-slow.

August 31. Rest.

September 1. Rest.

September 2. 7 a.m. 40-minute run. Travelled to Sweden.

September 3. 10 a.m. 40-minute run.

6 p.m. 40-minute run.

September 4. 6 p.m. Set up world-record 3,000 m: 7 min 52·8 s.

Early in my career I found that I had to organize every moment of my life to a single end. Social contacts often had to go. Diet had to be adjusted, so that careful eating was a positive aid to fitness and

not a penance. Ample sleep was essential. The mind had to be kept active to avoid slackness and boredom. I found learning languages the best exercise to keep interest always active. I am afraid I offended people by turning down social invitations and I heard myself called "an awkward b——". But the public has no idea of the concentration of an athlete on the job in hand. If I went to race at a meeting at the White City I had to go alone. My family went too, but they travelled separately. I could not risk breaking my concentration by idle conversation. Before a big race I wouldn't talk to my wife, let alone any odd stranger. I remember offending some titled woman to whom I was introduced before a cross-country race. I was in a state of tension and I just couldn't stop to chat without letting myself down.

Of course I made enemies. I remember a prominent man saying, "Why should I help Gordon Pirie when he wouldn't come to a dinner to which I invited him?" Well, others might have avoided such offences, but if I had been a gay dog I should never have excelled as an athlete.

To avoid boredom and staleness in training I have always consciously developed the sheer enjoyment of rhythm, speed, excitement and achievement on the track, no matter how many times I do the same thing. An athlete who isn't enjoying himself even in moments of the most agonizing effort at the point of exhaustion, might as well give up. Coaches sometimes warn athletes that training on a track with a stopwatch is liable to take all the fire and inspiration out of interval running. I agree that if stopwatch running becomes an end in itself it can consume an athlete's mind and body. He must enjoy the training for its own sake, not just as a means to an end.

I agree that my training to the point of exhaustion is not always the best method of physical conditioning. But it is essential for mental concentration. The body quickly recovers from exhaustion with ample sleep and good food, and can be quickly brought into good condition for a big race. Such training gives you the power to mould your condition at will. But above all it forces the mind to accept targets which it would never otherwise accept. Then the body, instead of giving up when it is tired, will go on doing what it doesn't want to do. It's the only way I know to raise your power to the zenith.

An athlete is bound to build up confidence in himself, and this can easily be mistaken for big-headedness if the performer doesn't watch his tongue. Murray Halberg, essentially a modest man, talked himself

into a high state of self-confidence, and I remember Herb Elliott saying to me at the Rome Olympic Village, "Murray is so determined it makes you sick." So, please try to make allowances for what an athlete says when he is on edge just before a big performance.

I tried a number of training gimmicks but found they didn't help in the long run. One was to run in heavy boots, as I knew Zatopek did. But I went one better. I had the heel and instep space replaced with lead so that the boots weighed about 4 lb each. The idea was to simulate running in mud. I gave up the idea because the boots broke the natural rhythm of my running and the benefit was not equivalent to the loss.

Various authorities seem to believe there is a special magic in running on certain surfaces. For example, Percy Cerutty, Herb Elliott's trainer, advocates running up sandhills—no hard surfaces. Arthur Lydiard is against training on tracks. I have trained on every conceivable type of surface, so my views spring from many years and thousands of miles of practical experience. I say that if you run correctly you can do it on all surfaces without risk of damage to bones and muscles. But I qualify that by adding that if you wish to race on a certain type of surface you should train predominantly on that surface. I have trained mainly on cinders, and I deny that this lessens the real enjoyment of running, as some experts declare. In London you are almost forced to run on cinder tracks. The roads are now too dangerous and poisoned with exhaust fumes.

In Europe, and particularly Eastern Europe, many top runners have complained of stomach upsets and ulcers. In trying to find the cause of these, some experts have blamed the intensive interval training these athletes do on tracks. I think a likelier cause is too many races, not too much training. I should also blame the frequent use of stimulants to achieve artificial peaks. It needs great strength of character and tremendous enthusiasm to reach the top and stay there, for more than three consecutive seasons. The turnover of athletes is now prodigious, particularly in authoritarian countries, and there is an obvious temptation to resort to drugs as a short-cut.

I could say a great deal about the use of drugs and stimulants by athletes. I believe it is standard practice before a race in certain Iron Curtain countries. Sudden staggering performances quite out of keeping with known form can only be explained by the use of drugs, and I believe their frequent use has accounted for the short athletic careers of some fine performers. Athletes of many other nations are

probably addicted to stimulants too, though of course concrete evidence is difficult to get. There is plenty of circumstantial evidence. In Rome a doctor asked me what stimulants I used. When I indignantly replied that I used none, I was told, "Well, you must be one of the few mugs left who doesn't." I have frequently seen athletes sniffing inhalants, presumably benzedrine. Once, at an international meeting, I remember a well-known doctor coming into the dressing-rooms before a race and asking the British competitors, "Does anybody want any little pills?" He would not say what they contained but he implied that they would make us run better. Officials, particularly the British ones, are scared stiff of this subject. If they wanted to they could insist on an investigation. To avoid any suspicion of scandal, saliva swabs should be taken of all finalists in Olympic and European Games. But I am afraid this would cause an international rumpus, and it might lead to the withdrawal of some teams. The officials prefer to ignore abuses. I don't believe things are worse in athletics than in other sports. I believe that in international cycling many of the competitors are 'souped-up' to a dangerous degree. Some day we shall have to tackle this serious problem which springs mainly from the extreme nationalism now poisoning sport.

I should hate to think I have given the impression that my life as an athlete has been a grim, joyless grind. Very far from it. Looking back, I think I can say I have had not only a very full and happy life, but lots of fun too. Nor has it been a mainly physical life, though I have concentrated so hard on physical fitness. One of the greatest compensations for hard work has been to travel over a large part of the world and to meet the world's peoples in the places where they live, to speak to some of these peoples in their own tongues and to be entertained in their family circles. Comradeship with other athletes and friendship with people of many lands add a warm glow to my memories. My postage bill is high for I receive welcome letters from friends in all corners of the earth.

There have been plenty of thrills. Imagine surfing in the hot sun on Sydney's famous Bondi Beach; sailing in the islands of the Pacific with skin tanned to a rich dark brown; praying for one's life in a plane with two engines smashed and sinking slowly towards the sea; eating oranges off the trees in California; seeing the Kremlin in the gaunt USSR; or watching the outriggers on Waikiki Beach. What more could one want for a full life?

In all my training over the years I remember with gratitude the help I had from a host of young runners who were eager to pace, time and encourage me. My parents gave me the greatest support from childhood on. Above all, my wife's constant help has been my standby. As a splendid athlete herself, she knew what I was doing. She was the one person who never nagged me that I was overdoing it. She had faith in what I had set myself to do, and she knew I could do it. But there must have been many times when she wished she had a husband less dedicated to athletics.

I have complained that athletes don't get much help, but I must acknowledge my debt to Derek Nicholls, the famous tennis coach. His expert massage before the Rome Olympics helped me to train very hard. It enabled my muscles to recover quickly from the very heavy demands I put on them. He made a personal sacrifice to go to Rome to help me, and I shall always be grateful.

I run all the year round because I love it, and I should certainly not like to practise athletics as Herb Elliott does—that is, to race for a few weeks and then disappear from view until the next year.

Athletics depends upon the also-rans, the club enthusiasts who run in any weather and whatever the result. I like to turn out with them for the great club to which I am still proud to belong—South London Harriers. Without such devoted club runners who do it for the joy of it, there would be no champions and no Olympics.

I should also like to thank many groundsmen who have gone out of their way to oblige me with special facilities for training. These men and their expert knowledge are an essential background to athletics, and they get very little limelight. Two stand out in my memory for a special tribute—Mr McTaggart at Motspur Park, and Mr Ebsworth at Hurlingham.

Chapter 4

THE HYPOCRISY OF BRITISH AMATEURISM

AMATEURISM in British athletics is a sham and a hypocrisy which prevents us from competing on equal terms with athletes abroad. I am not defending for a moment the gross forms of professionalism which are barely disguised in some countries and quite undisguised in Iron Curtain states. The alternative to the British sham is not, as its defenders would have us believe, to copy the foreigner; it is merely to abandon out-of-date ideals which prevent our athletes from dedicating their whole lives to their chosen careers without endless humiliating worries about money and their future.

The fact is that only a very few lucky athletes with private means or exceptional dedication can now afford to make the sacrifices to get to the top. What an indictment! The amateur rules were formed in the good old days specifically to keep out of athletics those people who couldn't afford to enjoy the sport as a hobby. The tragedy is that we are still bound by seedy Edwardian rules in the 1960s when the economics of daily life have been turned upside down. I well remember my father before the last war, as Secretary of South London Harriers, turning away an interested applicant for membership because he was only a labourer. My father was interpreting the rules quite correctly.

But an even more serious charge against the worn-out attitude of British amateurism is that it produces the wrong sort of runners, wrongly trained mentally and physically.

In the strict British sense there are no amateur athletes overseas except in certain Commonwealth countries. Yet we have to try to compete on equal terms with them. The only possible remedy for the

dishonest muddle in which we are involved is to sweep away the ridiculous distinctions of amateur and professional and start again with a new definition of what is an athlete. By all means let us have safeguards against possible abuses, but let them be reasonable ones in the light of modern circumstances. Sportsmanship does not depend on restrictive rules. Athletes can be relied on to be sportsmen, because the only thing that matters for them is to do their best, to meet their rivals on equal terms, and to enjoy the comradeship and friendship of other athletes of all nations. We British athletes have nothing to lose but our chains.

I have known dozens of foreign athletes who of course rank as amateurs but are amply provided for financially, out of athletics. They have no money worries. By British rules they would be professionals. But are they bad sportsmen? Certainly not. To earn a living out of athletics does not pollute or degrade them any more than it does the British professional cricketer. Only honest toil, sweat and intelligence, will get them to the top. So we need not fear that they will be debased by having their minds cleared of financial anxieties. I am happy to count among my friends Frank Sedgman, Lew Hoad, Stirling Moss and Stanley Matthews, among many other professionals. Would anyone dare to say they are not sportsmen?

Of course, our officials know all about the contravention of our amateur rules abroad. But they either have to pretend not to see them, or relax our rules. So they prefer to pretend. That is what I mean by hypocrisy. We are debarred on pain of expulsion from competing against professionals; so, like Nelson, our officials turn their blind eye to it.

First let me deal in detail with the economic plight of our athletes. Even at club level, kit and incidental expenses mount up considerably nowadays. But as soon as the athlete shows distinction and begins to climb the ladder the expenses weigh heavily. He must be smartly dressed on all occasions, for his own peace of mind and because he is an example to others. He must buy a wide variety of athletic kit too. Take running shoes alone—lightweight shoes are very expensive and they soon wear out. In my case I need 20 pairs a year, and that accounts for £100.

Then, training facilities. The athlete must have the entrée to a number of tracks where there are good showers—a must after training. Fees for use of arenas mount up to about £10 a year. Next, transport—

Shirley and I in Oslo, 1959.

Relaxing between training sessions in Freiburg with Roland Schillinger, the German trampolin champion.

My first race and record at White City in 1947. The stands are completely empty!

Mile - 4:42

Running with my father in the Olympic torch relay, 1948.

everybody knows how the price of the shortest journey has soared. The athlete has got to get about a good deal, and he will be lucky if he spends less than £100 a year on travelling. Then he needs food, lots of it, and of high quality. I calculate that food bills cost me £100 a year more than they do the sedentary individual.

Climbing still higher, if the athlete becomes a star and a public personality, he will have fanmail which he must answer. As a rule, only children send a stamped envelope for reply, so postage can cost a champion another £100 a year. That tots up to an extra £500 a year just to indulge his passion for athletics. It does not take into account all the other expenses of daily life which everybody has to face. Where is the money to come from? Well, of course, he must get a job and somehow keep it, even though he wants to devote the whole of his thought and energy to athletics. It must be a job which allows him to put athletics first if he is going to get anywhere. And where is he to find a benevolent employer who will let him take off the time necessary to train to the limit? A few are lucky. I have had two such employers, to whom my everlasting thanks are due. But it is at best an uncomfortable situation for any man with normal pride to be in. It makes him a marked man among his fellow employees—a man who is naturally resented because he is favoured.

When I look forward to the future I am sometimes frightened to think of the economic sacrifices I have made. At 30 I retire from athletics as a married man with no job and no prospects. After ten years of struggle to make ends meet, what have I gained except the privilege of running with a Union Jack on my chest? In any other country, of course, there would have been a well-paid job in athletics waiting for me on retirement. But not in Britain. I'm not exactly destitute but I have got to start all over again at this late age to face a new future. I'm not complaining. To me, every sacrifice has been worth it. But I can't honestly advise youngsters to do what I have done. I have to tell them to make themselves a career first and do running in their spare time—if any. And I know perfectly well that if they do so they will never be great champions and will never have the chance to test themselves to the limit.

Of course, things are changing slowly in other sports. Tennis faces such a challenge from the entertainment value of professionals that Wimbledon—the holy of holies of amateurism—is having to reconsider its future. Professional footballers are good sportsmen. In

cricket, amateurs and professionals get along pretty well together despite some glaring examples of favour for the amateur. And Peter May, one of Britain's finest sportsmen in every sense of the word, was able to accept large cheques in direct payment for his cricketing feats in Australia. He is still an amateur and still a great sportsman.

So, when will the wind of change blow over amateur athletics? I am not advocating direct payment to athletes, or state support, or university sponsors or subservience to promoters. I merely suggest that prominent athletes could support themselves if they were allowed to write for payment, to accept payment for TV and radio appearances and for sponsoring advertisements. After all, these mass media exploit the personality of the athlete to the full and often quite ruthlessly to make a profit, without contributing in most cases to the athlete's upkeep. Is it fair? But, of course, to relax the rule would free the athlete from the stranglehold of officialdom, and that is the one thing that most of the officials fear above all. It would enable the performer to answer back, which, God forbid.

The economic struggle has put paid to dozens of British athletes and prevented thousands more from ever reaching their potential. How many of them dare marry? If they do, how can they support a wife and family and a home and continue with their careers? They are forced to fade out. I shall be told that Bannister and Chataway and Brasher, at the height of their great careers, all had jobs. True, but they were jobs which did not interfere noticably with training and competing. These stars were able to act without economic restraint—in fact to train as if they were professionals. Moreover, the athletic careers of these three never, in my opinion, reached their highest possibilities, nor did they last as long as they might have done with more exclusive devotion to athletics.

It must be obvious that something is economically wrong when so many of our best athletes and those from the Commonwealth are lured away to America, where university athletic scholarships give them a chance of full-time dedication to their work. Ever since 1954 American universities have tried to put me on the campus. I have had many wonderfully tantalizing offers, fat packages bursting open to reveal brochures to tempt even the strongest mind. I could still go. Twenty or thirty notable British athletes have gone and I can't blame them. The latest is Mike Wiggs, the British-champion Olympic miler. I saw him off at London Airport when he went recently to take

up a scholarship at an American athletic school because he could not find support to continue his career here. Mike Wiggs, one of the best runners in the world, is almost certainly lost to British athletics, and as soon as ever he went British officials made sure he would not return by instantly threatening him publicly with expulsion if he even raced in America—let alone accepted support. Wiggs in reply, not unnaturally, told the officials in effect to jump in the sea.

Youngsters like Wiggs don't go to America for an easy time. I know Wiggs was very torn about leaving this country. He didn't want to go. He went to dedicate his life to the fierce, gruelling ordeal of training himself to the limit. That is a thing he couldn't do here. He didn't have a rich uncle.

Now, why do I say that British amateurism produces the wrong sort of runner?

First, because the British ideal is to produce a runner with the classical style which was hallowed in the amateur athletics of Oxford and Cambridge forty or fifty years ago. I call it the Oxford style and it is probably derived from Graeco-Roman statuary. I claim that it is artificial and unnatural. It encourages the runners to take very long strides and to run only with the head and the legs, not with the whole body. The arms and shoulders perform a negative function. The upper part of the body does not contribute to the force of the whole coordinated movement. The arms are merely used to balance, not to increase momentum. This is an inhibited way of running. It may look effortless, but it is uneconomic, cramping, unnatural, and wasteful of energy. It is admired as graceful, but to me it is clumsy compared with the liberated grace of a man like Zatopek, who showed us how to use the whole body. British runners have been admired because they keep a sort of stiff upper lip even in the agony of a race. They restrain their emotions not to show suffering. The free runner shows in his face and gestures that it is torture and agony to give his last ounce of energy. How silly to pretend that it is not. Only the British would admire such repression. The restrained runner can never reach the greatest heights. His so-called style is a delusion. To achieve it, many British athletes have distorted their natural rhythm and adopted habits foreign to their physiques. Rhythm is an individual thing to every athlete. Until he achieves it he will never find greatness. And rhythm is the enemy of style. British coaches are still trying to produce stylish, instead of uninhibited, athletes.

Next, the psychological training of the British amateur. There is the great conspiracy of false modesty, or inverted modesty, which pervades all British amateur sport. Everywhere in the world except here and in some Commonwealth countries, the aim is to win. In Britain it is to play a good game or run a good race—win or lose. And, since this unique attitude inevitably produces so many losers, it has come to be accepted that there is something specially sporting in losing, and something not quite British in being determined to win. The snobbery of the good loser quite obscures the fact that losing is a weakness that could often be avoided by trying a little harder. I call it a conspiracy because it involves, not only the officials, the coach and the performer, but the public who pay the gate-money. They all imagine there is something peculiarly British and comforting in being able to smile when beaten as if it didn't matter. I can assure you that athletes of all nations can smile at defeat. But they don't think it doesn't matter. They don't excuse themselves for losing with a sentimental consolation of national superiority. If they lose they accept the blame—individually.

This British acceptance of the second-best results from a much deeper reluctance to commit oneself utterly to an ideal. Dedication is not quite the thing, don't you know, not quite sporting. Gentlemen take life much more easily except in a national emergency, and God forbid that sport should be regarded as a national emergency. Gentlemen don't go to extremes—the middle of the road, old boy. And this British weakness pervades athletics. It means that officials, coaches and sports writers, perhaps unconsciously, pour out propaganda against the maximum effort. Most of them constantly restrain the young athlete and tell him he will kill himself if he does too much. They told me so for ten years. They still tell me so. Moreover, they often accept second-best standards as their goal, and are very complacent when they reach what is an insular best, isolated from world opinion. Until we shake off this mental limitation we can't go all-out.

Britain needs a great scientific and medical research institute comparable with that run by Gerschler in Germany. There are other similar institutes in various countries. I am not suggesting that Gerschler is unique. But would the rulers of British athletics regard a scientific attitude to the sport as quite British? I am sure they would not. There is nowhere in this country where an athlete can accurately test his capabilities, his use of his body and his mental concentration on his job. Concentration in the athletic sense of the power of mind over

body is again not quite the thing, is it? It smacks of excess, old boy. A bit professional, don't you think? So, athletes are not encouraged to accept sacrifices of their comforts as a way of life. That would mean giving up too many of the good things of life. There's no harm in a binge. It's not very matey to refuse a party. The Old Pals Act draws you into a conspiracy of bonhomie where you are either a good sport and follow the crowd or an awkward, smug person who makes everybody feel a bit uncomfortable.

The bonhomie extends from the club level upwards. A runner who won't turn out for his club is a bit of an outsider even if he is concentrating on something much higher. He is liable to be ostracized, even sent to Coventry, instead of being applauded for having ambition. So, the outstanding British runner has to conform to an all-the-year-round programme. In winter he feels he ought to run for his club. In summer he is concerned with the championship meetings. So he fails to get the necessary lay-off which he needs to build up for big events. In my opinion, an outstanding example of the harm this can do to a champion is the case of Ken Norris. He raced every cross-country, track and road race for two or three years, and I believe this resulted in serious loss of form.

But then, the clubs are gripped in the stranglehold of amateur restrictions just as the individual is. Take my own club, the South London Harriers, which has been the greatest training centre for young distance runners in Britain. It has had to struggle along with hopelessly inadequate facilities in an old, disused chapel, when it should have had everything of the best. Why should a club with such members as Derek Ibbotson, Peter Driver, Jack Parker and myself be short of anything? If the champions of South London Harriers had been permitted to advertise their club (not themselves, mark you) it would have been able to build itself a handsome stadium and track with facilities for thousands of young athletes.

That brings me to sports facilities. There has been a tremendous national campaign, backed by the enthusiasm of the Duke of Edinburgh, to provide sports facilities. But what happens? When they are provided they are often quite inadequately used. Far too many young people show a complete lack of interest. They are too busy having a good time. It is the ideal of athletic prowess which needs a great national campaign behind it and that, as far as my branch of the sport is concerned, we shall never get until we sack the present amateur

dictators. I have seen it stated that in a country like Czechoslovakia with only about 13½ million people, 50 per cent of the population are, or have been, public performers in some branch of sport. Sport is a natural attraction to every youngster there. Think what it could do for some of our beatniks.

The training and terms of employment of coaches are also sad weaknesses in British athletics. Without adequate scientific support, equipment and know-how, they have to rely on trial-and-error experience, flair and plain guesswork in assessing an athlete's capabilities. They have no idea of the exhaustive, exhausting tests, mental and physical, which are used in an up-to-date athletics laboratory. Every individual needs a different régime and schedule of training from those of any other individual. Without them it is possible to set an athlete's sights far too low or to impose burdens beyond his natural capabilities. Wrong training is therefore frequent and inevitable.

Coaches take written and oral exams and study hard to qualify, but I believe the whole curriculum is based on out-of-date conceptions inherited from the past. The value of coaches to athletes is also restricted because of their terms of employment. Their work is governed by the demands of the Ministry of Education, which pays a large grant towards their salaries and so claims a lot of their time for the teaching of instructors in physical training for schools and colleges. Coaches cannot give their undivided attention and enthusiasm to athletes since they spend so much of their time lecturing. They are grossly underpaid, as all teachers are, and for the most part disgruntled with their conditions.

Let me, in concluding this chapter on amateurism, contrast the situation of the athlete in other countries with that of his counterpart in Britain. Don't run away with the idea that I am condoning the abuses that are seen abroad. I am merely showing that overseas athletes are free from financial anxiety, to concentrate on their jobs, and that these are the people we have to compete against. In Sweden it is no secret that athletes receive large payments from promoters out of gate money. Yet they rank as amateurs. They can retire as well-to-do men. One world-famous Swedish runner was recently reported to have bought a farm for £26,000. When a team of British athletes were in Sweden in 1957 they were intrigued to see that Dan Waern, world-record 1,000 m runner, was sponsoring advertisements for

milk. This was quite in order in his country, but would have instantly disqualified a British runner.

Way back in 1946 in Sweden there was a terrific rumpus when world-record runners Gundar Haegg and Arne Andersson were disqualified for receiving gate money. Actually, things came to a head, not because these two stars were getting gate money, but because they demanded too much and the promoters revolted. Officials were forced to act; but those promoters bitterly regretted their complaints. When Haegg and Andersson disappeared there was a disastrous slump in gate money.

In all Communist countries, of course, the jobs which 'amateur' athletes have are purely nominal. These jobs keep them in reasonable comfort but do not interfere in any way with their athletics. There are State training camps where athletes are trained and kept with exclusive attention to athletics. Russian athletic stars are sent to the Black Sea resorts to train in mid-winter.

The French have a national institute of sport in the Bois de Vincennes, where athletes are kept in comfort as long as they like and where they get every facility. The system of school and university support for athletes in the United States is open and above-board. Nobody sees anything wrong with it. It is the theme of hundreds of heroic films and stories. There is no country outside the British Commonwealth with any sports prowess that I know of where a champion is forced to make a living other than by athletics. They all have some system which enables him to exploit his skill and personality in various degrees so that he can concentrate on being a champion. We shall learn some day.

Chapter 5

THE ELDERLY DICTATORS OF BRITISH ATHLETICS: THESE MEN MUST GO

The handful of elderly men who dictate athletic policy in Britain are, in my opinion, completely out of touch with the rank and file of athletes and with world developments in the sport. Moreover, the structure and organization of athletics are totally undemocratic and positively handicap the athlete in his struggle to do the best for his country. These are serious charges which I shall support with a mass of evidence.

Modern athletics have not had a long history, and the old-stagers now in charge are mainly those who took part in the sport, or supported it, in the heyday of the amateur gentleman. They had no financial problems to divert them from their hobby and the rules were specially designed to keep out the riff-raff. The rules are still modelled on conditions that existed between 1880 and 1920. "The day the athletes tell me what to do, I shall resign," one leading official was quoted as saying. This is the spirit that runs right through the organization. They direct the athletes like the board of a private company, with secret meetings and secret balance sheets which are available to committee members only.

Why does not new blood get to the top? The answer is that it takes about 30 years to climb up the rungs of the ladder and by the time anyone gets there events have moved on a bit and he ought to retire. The system is that clubs elect representatives to county committees; counties elect representatives to areas; and areas in turn elect to the AAA committee. In effect, the AAA committee elect themselves, for their word is law. The system ensures that prominent sportsmen of the

old school are chosen year after year because they have always done the job, and the chance of a young man's getting to the top is remote. Of course, they are all well-meaning, devoted, self-sacrificing men who want to do their best for athletics, and they think they are doing fine. They give up a lot of spare time and energy to governing the sport, but I think they minister more to their own sense of importance than to the good of the game, because they are simply out-of-date.

I have heard the jibe from officials, "Why don't athletes put something back into the game?"—meaning, why don't they start climbing that ladder? Well, I have known a lot of young men try but they very soon give up because they are promptly overruled by the oldsters. There is no machinery at the top for discovering what athletes think. Officials might get a shock if there were. To suggest a ballot of club athletes on any important issue would be regarded with horror. The officials accept responsibility for the financial problems of athletics but wash their hands of the individual financial problems of athletes. I remember the fact being drawn to the attention of a leading official that a certain very promising young athlete couldn't afford to buy the large number of shoes a runner needs. The official replied that the boy had no right to be an athlete if he couldn't afford his kit. The main function of the top officials seems to be to maintain the ridiculous amateur restrictions on athletes which ruled in the old days when performers were mainly from Oxford and Cambridge with rich fathers and uncles. They haven't realized times have changed.

Of course, athletes have been complaining of this state of affairs for fifteen years to my knowledge. Unfortunately, their active life is restricted. The officials have time on their side. If awkward voices are raised from the ranks they can be safely disregarded, for in a few years those athletes will have had their day. Then there will be keen youngsters in their places only too anxious to please and get on without bothering about the politics of the sport. I blame the indifference of many athletes, but I can't be surprised.

Recently Britain's finest half-miler, Derek Johnson, was nominated for a place on the Southern Area Committee (not a top dictator job, mark you). His intelligence, vast experience and ability to handle people, should have made him an obvious choice. But what happened? A committee of eggheads were voted in and Derek Johnson was rejected. There was some sign of revolt by the rank-and file against the British AAA Board when Derek Johnson and Peter Hildreth formed

the International Athletes' Club to represent British athletes competing abroad. The club claimed the right of athletes to be represented on the Board and made these charges: that there was favouritism in team selection; that athletes were never consulted; that British coaches were not consulted by the BAAB; and that athletes were not getting the 2 dollars a day pocket-money internationally agreed on at Melbourne.

The Club enforced the 2-dollar-a-day rule after a lot of argument, and it has done some good to improve the status of the highest ranking athletes; but in my opinion it has not been nearly aggressive enough to break the stranglehold of officialdom.

Derek Johnson, though at the top of his form, was passed over for the 4 × 400 m relay race in the European Games in 1958. Then Johnson was dropped from the GB *v.* France match, and it was stated that the Board did so to give younger athletes experience, although at the same meeting I was picked to run in my first-ever steeplechase. When Derek wrote for an explanation of this crazy example of selection he said he would not run again for a British team until the Board stopped treating athletes like performing monkeys. Fighting words, but they didn't get him anywhere.

British athletes are hedged about by a host of regulations and permits which are not found necessary in any other country except parts of the Commonwealth where a similar out-of-date attitude prevails. The legislation that governs an athlete's appearances abroad causes perhaps more disputes and complaints than any other. Here, Mr Jack Crump, Secretary of the BAA Board, is the supreme authority, and it is essential to get his permission before racing abroad; otherwise you risk being hounded out as a professional. There is a wonderfully named body known as the To and From Abroad Committee which carries on an elaborate form of balancing between British and overseas athletes. A British athlete often finds that he can only appear abroad if there is some *quid-pro-quo* agreement for a foreign star of similar magnitude to appear here. Thus, as one of many examples I could quote, I was not allowed to race in Belgium in 1952 unless Gaston Reiff appeared here. This is a degrading form of barter in my view, and totally unnecessary. A permanent grievance is that all invitations for a British athlete to appear abroad must go to the Committee and not to the individual. The result is that the athlete never hears—except in rare cases where the Committee can see some advantage—

of invitations he has received. It just isn't his business. Over and over again in many countries I have been asked, "Why didn't you accept our invitation to race in our country?" Over and over again I have felt humiliated by having to reply, "I'm very sorry, but I didn't know you had invited me." Yes, we are performing monkeys. When I have asked the committeemen why invitations to me were not passed on, the reply has been, "Oh, we didn't think you'd want to go." For foreign athletes to get permission to perform abroad is a formality, and they are virtually free to choose what they will do.

I was libelled by a Sunday newspaper in 1959 when I was in Los Angeles. It reported in big headlines that I had been carpeted and accused of a breach of my amateur status because I ran there without permission. Actually, as I report later in this book, I had gone to endless trouble to phone right across America to get permission from Jack Crump before I raced. But how silly that I had to do so.

One reason put forward by the Board is that a team manager must accompany athletes abroad. While I agree with this in the case of young inexperienced athletes, I believe it is bunkum for an experienced competitor. The reply to complaints against the AAA is often this: "We provide the facilities, so we decide what shall be done." But do they provide the facilities? Certainly they don't provide a warming-up field for runners at London's White City as other authorities abroad do at top arenas; and they won't let you warm up in the centre. I was once reported to the AAA for 'ungentlemanly conduct' because I did a jog run in the centre. And if the AAA provide the facilities, the star performers certainly draw the gate money, although they have to pay all their own expenses at AAA championship meetings and fork out an entrance fee on top of that. So, who should call the tune?

The attitude of subservience to the ruling body extends to coaches and team captains as well as rank-and-file athletes. The coach should surely know best what his charges can do and what they can't. He has watched them carefully and knows better than anybody their physical condition. Yet coaches are frequently overruled in their decisions by chairborne committeemen. To quote a glaring example: Geoffrey Dyson at Warsaw in 1957 knew precisely the men he had trained for the relay race, but his choice was not accepted and officials decided. This sort of interference disheartens many excellent coaches. Of course, officials do some good if only to inspire athletes to prove them wrong.

Team captains, with certain outstanding exceptions, are also forced

to be compliant yes-men to the officials. They are generally chosen for their docility under orders, and so athletes are often deprived of the leadership, inspiration and support, they need. Team managers want captains to be mere figureheads, not leaders. They are rarely allowed to share authority. The job of a British team captain seems to be confined where possible to the formal duties of handing over souvenir tie-clips from the British Board to the rival athletes and to receiving a huge pennant of embroidered silk from the opposing captain! I have served in teams under captains who would not hear a word of complaint against the management, however urgent. They assumed that the officials must be right and that athletes were naughty boys who have to be firmly disciplined. There have been notable exceptions: for example, I well remember how John Wrighton, the European 400 m champion, did a real job of captaincy which helped his team immensely.

Looking at the future I see a further decline in the prestige of our athletes unless the ridiculous farce of amateurism, as understood by the top brass of British athletics, is swept away. One healthy sign is the recent appointment of a new British team manager, Pat Sage of Aylesbury, a younger type of official who is very fair-minded and generous towards the athletes.

In my next chapter I will tell you how and why the amateur rules are strangling our sport.

Chapter 6

PERSONALITIES

The two great British runners who were held up as an ideal and an example during the first part of my career were, of course, Bannister and Chataway. They are still regarded by the dominant Oxford school of British athletes as the highest expression of the classic runner. I am very far from wishing to belittle their splendid performances—in fact I think their feats were all the more remarkable since they were performed in spite of the handicap of the British 'amateur' style. Bannister and Chataway would have been much greater in my opinion, and would certainly have lasted a lot longer at the top, if they had been trained without the characteristic British inhibitions of style which I have analysed. They were unlucky, too, to be associated with negative influences which always discouraged them from developing their capabilities to the full. They were trained in accordance with the theories of the celebrated coach Franz Stampfl. It was Stampfl who constantly derided my austerity programme and wrote that such discipline as Pirie subjected himself to was not necessary to bring an athlete to his highest form. He cited Chataway and Bannister to prove his point, and predicted that I would burn myself out. But as we now know it was Stampfl's protégés who faded out while Pirie went plodding on.

Bannister and Chataway both suffered from the theory which has now bedevilled British athletics for many years—the theory that a runner can train to be on his peak for a particular day and so need not be in constant training. It would save a lot of blood, toil, tears and sweat if this theory were true, and no doubt its popularity springs from the fact that it seems to offer a short-cut to greatness.

Both Bannister and Chataway were 'natural' athletes, that is they

could pull out a prodigious performance with relatively little training. Their ability to do so may have encouraged them to underrate the value of training.

Chataway was a fine runner at Sherborne school, and he developed himself by running in the Dorset lanes. During his army career he was given every opportunity to devote himself to athletics, and he did a great deal to encourage army athletes. Then at Oxford he came under the influence of the prevailing ideas. The peak theory encouraged him to hold himself back for the big events instead of throwing himself whole-heartedly into athletics. I always had the impression, although I may be wrong, that for Chataway hard training was a penance, not a joy. I have seen this in many fine runners. It means that they start off with tremendous enthusiasm but fade from boredom after a few seasons because they can't face the gruelling ordeal any more. If an athlete is coached in the right way, training will never be a bore to be got through as quickly as possible. No doubt, the surroundings at Oxford make it very difficult for an athlete to deny himself the leisure and the good things of life, and I felt as far back as 1952 and 1953 that Chataway would not find it easy to keep long at the top. Of course, I had tremendous admiration for his courage and dash, especially on that historic night in 1954 when he edged out Kuts in a great duel at the White City to run a world-record 5,000 m in 13 min 51·6 s. What few people realized that night was the tremendous mental and physical effort he made to overcome what I consider to be his lack of full training. He had been beaten in the British Championships and the European Championships, yet he had the courage to take on Kuts on the red cinders in front of the critical White City crowd. I remember that a quarter of an hour after the finish of the race he still seemed dazed by his effort. He jogged round to where I was in the arena and said, "For God's sake run with me a little, I feel so awful." His face was tinged bluish-purple and he seemed to drift along as if he were in a trance. When he had put on his track suit he sat on the competitors' benches with Bannister and stared at the scoreboard at the far end of the stadium as if he couldn't believe his eyes.

It was the last great race he ran. In fact, he had trained for the European Championships a few weeks before, where he failed to do his best. He thus proved, I believe, the fallacy of trying to save oneself for one great race. He had trained for one event and failed, yet he won another in a manner which exceeded his wildest dreams.

Chataway's running in the following season, 1955, illustrates another important lesson for athletes. He joined with Ibbotson at the August Bank Holiday meeting, Great Britain *v.* West Germany, in attacking the world 3-mile record, and set up a world-record time of 13 min 23·2 s. But there was no real competition for him in the race. He was, in effect, running against a stopwatch. A few days later he ran at the White City against the Hungarian Tabori in the 3 miles. Tabori beat him easily. Yet Tabori's time was 20 seconds slower than that which Chataway had set up. To me, this seems to show that the races best worth winning are against other athletes of comparable or greater power, and not against a stopwatch. In 1956 Chataway never did what I should call serious training and he faded out accordingly.

Bannister's apparently effortless style misled a great many young athletes into trying to copy him. He always seemed to me to be holding back his emotions and concealing the suffering of his body. Perhaps he didn't really suffer like other people. After he retired he wrote in a lyrical style in his book *The First Four Minute Mile* about the fancies that went through his head as he performed this great feat. Perhaps he was romanticizing it in retrospect. Certainly, in my experience any extraneous fancies are impossible when I am racing flat out. My entire concentration is on my running. Even his wonderful break-through to beat the magic four minutes did not seem to use him to the utmost limit. I believe he could have run the mile in 3 min 50 s in 1954 instead of being content to beat the barrier by a few yards. He could also with maximum training have extended the length of his career and the range of distances at which he excelled. But Bannister was never in the world class at ½ mile, 2 miles or 3 miles. He saved himself for big events and picked and chose his races. Many of them were pace-making jobs of running for records instead of running to beat top-class athletes.

My tremendous admiration for Bannister's best performances does not blind me to the fact that he was regarded as a pet by the rulers of athletics. For example, in 1952 he was chosen for the Olympic Games 1,500 m without having to qualify that year in the British Championships or some other major championship. (This was in sharp contrast to the attitude of the selectors in requiring Brian Hewson to race twice in the Great Britain *v.* Germany match in 1955!) Bannister was further privileged on occasion to go overseas as his own team manager, although the usual arrangement is for an athlete to have an independent team manager, and he had permission to write newspaper articles—

they appeared in *The Times*—while he was competing in athletics.

He trained intensely for particular events, but it was not a way of life for him to be trained, as it is for the greatest athletes. He was exceptionally endowed by nature, and so, if he had exerted himself more, he would have been phenomenal.

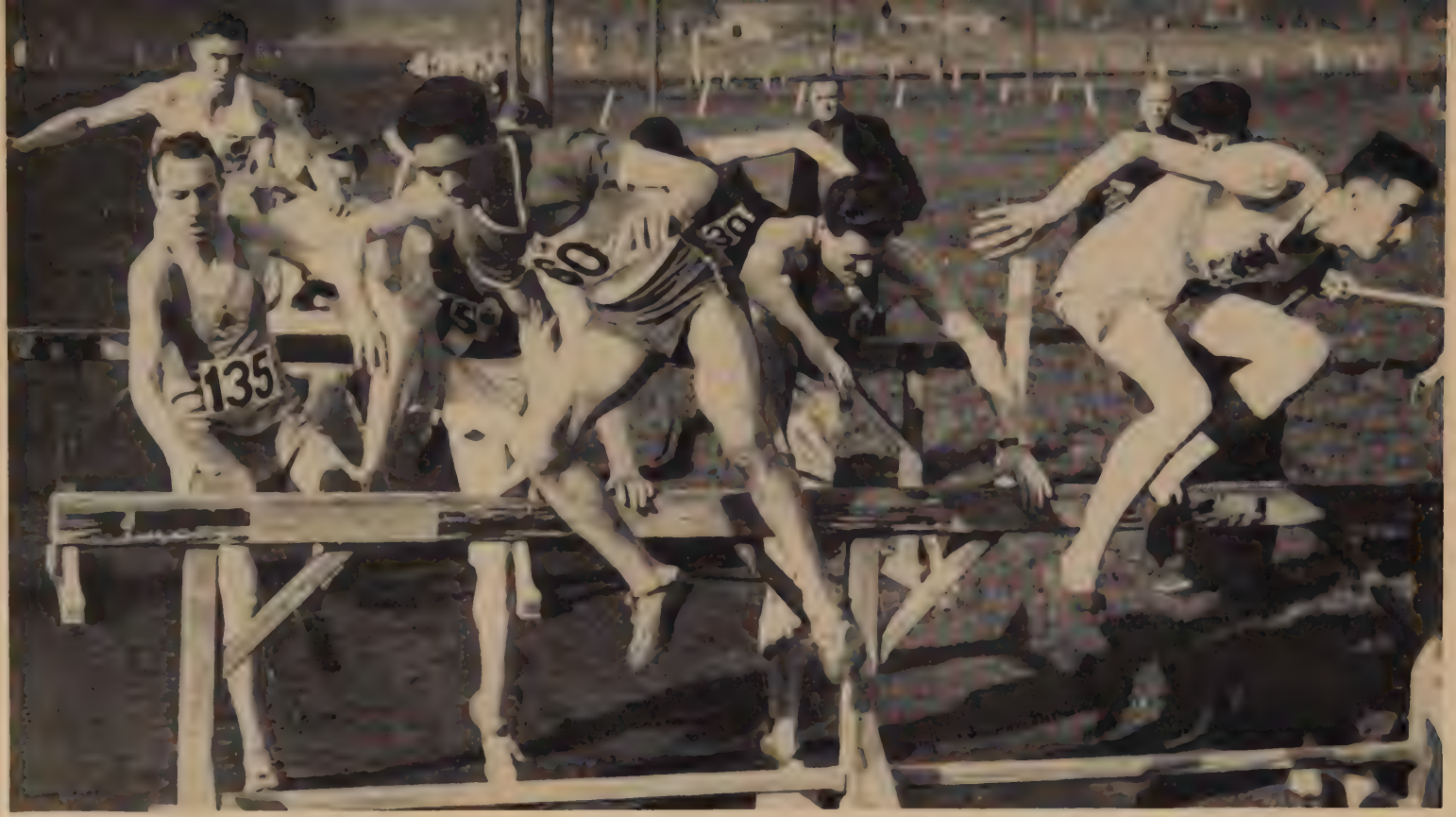
I was away in Germany when Bannister, having been paced by Brasher for 880 yards and then by Chataway for 660 yards, strode the last 220 yards alone to run the first four-minute mile at Oxford. As an Englishman I was delighted that he had done it, although he was paced. Pacing was subsequently banned for purposes of record running, but it does not detract from a fine performance. In fact, most of the world records created since that time have been in paced races, despite the international ruling to which the IAAF apparently turns a blind eye.

Bannister perhaps gave the impression that running was easy and that it was unnecessary to train hard for success. This was particularly misleading for the youth of the time, who were convinced by Bannister's example that you were either good or bad by natural endowment and that training would not make you any better.

Although Bannister was a medical student at the time of his best performances and no doubt advised by doctors, I do not regard his training as scientific in the sense that I have seen science applied to athletics by such experts as Gerschler and Reindell at Freiburg. The public image he presented was of a man who had used science to break through the physical and psychological barrier of the four-minute mile. People assumed that he had evolved original scientific principles, but I am convinced that he did nothing of the sort. I remember Professor Hemmingway of Leeds University writing that Bannister required less training than other runners because he had the ability to excite his heart. But Professor Reindell proved to me that the limiting factor is not merely the degree of excitement of the heart but the rate at which the body can absorb oxygen and make full use of it. This capacity to absorb and use oxygen is what is increased by training. I proved that to my satisfaction on the treadmill machine at Freiburg which measured these capabilities of the body.

When I went to Freiburg in 1953 I was told I had a phenomenal heart, but that the limiting factor was my oxygen-consumption rate. This I greatly increased by training.

There was a rather ridiculous stunt by the BBC involving Chataway and me. After running in Regents Park we had microphones applied



"Cross country" French style at the Vincennes racetrack, Paris. The two-together hurdles make formidable obstacles.

Training in Oslo under Kim's critical observation.

Swimming training does no harm. With Sverre Fjelstad in Norway.

to our hearts, and the sounds were broadcast. What I didn't know was that Bannister was in the studio and that he had been asked there to compare our two heart-beats. He had to admit that there was no apparent difference in them. Such a test may have seemed scientific but it was, in fact, meaningless. To test an athlete's heart it is necessary to measure it by three-dimensional X-ray pictures and to test its reaction to strenuous exercise over a considerable period. The BBC test was merely an entertainment gimmick. All it proved was that Chataway's heart and mine both went 'boom'.

As a person I found Bannister unpredictable. I owe him one tremendous debt which he probably never realized. In 1954 I was bedridden with a broken bone in my foot. I was deeply depressed about my future as an athlete and feared that I should never race again. Out of sheer generosity of heart Bannister wrote me a charming letter of encouragement. I knew that at that time he was not only absorbed in his medical studies but was training hard for two of his many 'peak' efforts of that year, his Empire and European victories.

His letter was all the more valued by me. It bucked me up when things seemed blackest. A year later he wrote again saying how pleased he was that I had fought through. It was a big-hearted gesture and little he knew that, but for the first letter, he might never have had the occasion to write the second.

Now by contrast let me talk of Emil Zatopek. The first thing that struck me about him when I saw him in 1948 was how different his way of running was from the British style. I had seen so many British runners beaten into the ground by foreigners that I thought there must be something worth investigating in this great man's methods. So many runners are secretive, fearing that others may copy them. Zatopek wanted everybody to know how he did it. He was well aware that only the best would emerge at the top, and if they did so by copying him, nobody would be more pleased than Emil. In those days his routine was unique. He was a true pioneer. Now his methods are in many respects standard practice among the champions. Zatopek has handed down to the next generation the knowledge that has enabled them to beat his own records as I and others have done. Years after his retirement Basil Heatley has brilliantly shown recently how to beat Zatopek's 10-mile record. I am sure the most generous congratulations of all would come from Emil to his successors.

His training methods seemed quite fantastic twelve years ago.

They were of course derided by the take-it-easy British school. To strengthen his legs, for example, he attached weights to them on pulleys while he exercised. One secret of his success was that he never let himself get bored. He would jog for hours on the same spot, doing an endless 'Knees up, Mother Brown' while reading a book or listening to the radio. Everything was fun to him. On wash days at home he piled all the dirty clothes in the bath and then ran on them for hours. His mind was always as active as his body and, although his training was so severe that it absorbed every minute of his day, he was never a crank.

I had the privilege of forming a lasting friendship with this great man. He knows eight or more languages intimately. I have letters from him written in perfect idiomatic English. You would never guess they were not written by an Englishman. I had the pleasure of meeting him not only on the track but in his home. This was the gayest and merriest home I have ever visited. In 1951 he married his wife Dana, who was a javelin thrower. In the 1952 Olympics when Zatopek won three gold medals, Dana also won one, so there were four in the family. These two used to romp like children or like beautiful young animals in their perfect fitness of body. Once in fun he threw her into a stream. Unfortunately, her foot hit a rock and she broke an ankle. While she had her leg in plaster Emil ran with her on his back through deep snow for training. I have seen him and his wife hurling a javelin full tilt towards each other. The trick was to catch it in the air above their heads and return it as fast as possible. A dangerous game, and they loved it.

Zatopek's sense of fun turned not only his training but his races into a joy. He never seemed to feel the awful tension before a race which lesser mortals endure. His antics often helped to release this tension for others. I shall never forget the way he playfully kept 30,000 people waiting for us to start a race in Prague. He could use his sense of humour brilliantly, too, for gamesmanship. Certainly some people were put off by his light-hearted fun in tense moments. He sometimes pretended to be in the extreme of agonizing exhaustion when in fact he had plenty of energy in hand. Or, in the most hectic moment of a race he would cause consternation by patting a rival on the back and giving him a generous word of encouragement. He frequently chatted amiably when running full pelt alongside a competitor. You never knew what this incredible man would do.

Zatopek, now in his early forties, resumed his army career when he retired and is nominally an officer; but he is also one of the greatest athletic coaches in Europe. He was one of the coaches of the Czech team at the Rome Games and I am sure that for very many years yet he will be an inspiration to new generations of runners. Above all he is a professional in the best sense of that ambiguous word and he is also the greatest sportsman I have ever met.

My experiences of Brian Hewson illustrate valuable lessons for athletes. He won a string of AAA titles from 1953 onwards and was one of the few outstanding junior champions who became a senior champion. His greatest triumph was to win the European 1,500-m title at Stockholm in 1958. He did many fantastic performances but was curiously liable to fits of depression about athletics which I attribute to wrong training ideas. Franz Stampfl's methods damped down the aggressive streak in him. Competitively I did not meet him often, but I never found him willing to cooperate tactically with me. He insisted on being a lone wolf in race tactics. I remember in 1955 before a small 1-mile race in which we were both entered, I said to him, "If we both put everything we've got together into this race we may do something tremendous and then when we get to the last lap, may the better man win." I had in mind the tactics adopted so successfully by the Hungarians which had enabled them that year practically to sweep the board in middle-distance racing. They helped each other to maintain a searing pace throughout a race, but Hewson preferred to run independently. In the Great Britain *v.* Germany match at the White City in 1959 similarly he wouldn't cooperate with Ken Wood. The first three laps were so slow that people in the crowd actually booed, an unheard-of sensation. Ken Wood, the stubborn Yorkshireman, was determined not to be manoeuvred into an early lead and so killing himself by going all-out. Wood was blamed by press and public, but my sympathy was with him. Hewson could perhaps have helped him, but he was saving his ½-mile speed for the last lap. He won, but Wood was a disgruntled last.

When the amazing Hungarians Iharos and Tabori were racing everywhere, here and on the Continent, and sweeping all before them, I felt it was a great pity that so many British athletes would not cooperate to give all they had instead of acting as lone wolves. I believe we could have had a team to beat the Hungarians if we had developed the team spirit. I do not intend this as a criticism of a great

runner, who is entitled to run his races as he thinks best, but rather as an illustration of an attitude which I think personally is very prevalent in British athletics and is not always to its advantage.

Mention of the Hungarians brings me to the great coach, Mihali Igloi. He is in the Gerschler class of men who are capable of creating athletes. From ordinary runners he has produced men of world-class like Tabori, Iharos, Rozsavoglyi and Rozsnyoi. The ruthless suppression by the Russians of the Hungarian rising of 1956 was an athletic as well as a world tragedy. Igloi's efforts should have been crowned with the greatest honours at Melbourne that year. Instead, his team, prevented by the fighting from doing proper training, arrived exhausted and psychologically beaten by their country's ordeal. Igloi was exiled and went to America, and is coaching at the San Jose Valley Youth Centre in California. Tragedy pursued some of the other athletes of Hungary. Tabori, too, never went back to his country. He could almost certainly have finished second to Herb Elliott in the 1,500 m at Rome in 1960, but the Olympic officials refused to let him run. Rozsnyoi was another who would not go back. He went to Austria and has since run for that country; but the Communists objected when Austria entered him for the 1958 European Games in Stockholm, so he had to withdraw, to the disgust of the athletic fraternity. Where is the spirit of international sport and fellowship when such a thing can happen without a word of public protest from any British athletic officials?

This chapter on the outstanding personalities of athletics in my time would be incomplete without mention of Derek Johnson, an athlete who never lost the common touch. It was a tragedy when illness caused his premature retirement. He was Britain's greatest all-round runner and excelled in everything from 100 yds to the cross-country. Johnson was the brilliant boy from the East End who won a scholarship to Oxford but insisted on remaining loyal to his boyhood club, Woodford Green. Although he became President of Oxford University Athletic Club, he resisted all pressure to desert his early associations, as so many others had done, and join the swagger Achilles Club. Johnson brought new blood into Oxford athletics and set a new standard of loyalties which did much for the cause of sport. As I have told elsewhere in this book, he has done an important job for athletics by creating the International Athletes Club.

I must also mention as an all-time great that happy warrior, Murray

Halberg. He is an example of the athlete who is prepared to sacrifice everything to win maximum development of himself. He has sacrificed so much that he is known as Hobo Halberg. Nothing matters for Murray except running, and it is sad to think that his country so little deserves such a wonderful sportsman. In New Zealand athletics is a neglected Cinderella. Footballers and cricketers can always find generous sponsors there, for to employ them gives great kudos to any business. Not so athletes. This is short-sighted, for athletes can do enormous good to national prestige. To encourage a good team will do more for a country than a host of lush-living diplomats.

Chapter 7

A BOLD WORD TO THE GIRLS

GREATLY daring, I am going to say a few words, which I am sure will get me into trouble, about women athletes. Some of my views have already put me in the dog-house in my own home, and I must make it clear they are just my own opinions and not those of my wife. In fact, she and I have had some fierce arguments about them.

I think it is time British women athletes stood on their own feet instead of relying so much on men. They don't seem to realize the tremendous box-office attraction they could be if they cut loose and broke through the old-fashioned barriers which men have put up to hold them back.

It is not generally realized by the public that men officials have absolute dictatorship over women's international athletics. Though women have their own officials of course, their decisions have to be submitted for approval to men for international events, and anything the women decide may be overruled, even to the choice of performers in races. It's humiliating and silly.

At home women are segregated at separate athletic meetings as if they were second-class citizens. Men dictate this athletic apartheid. The result is that the women's meetings are often poorly supported by the public. The audience are mainly boy-friends. Only British girls would put up with such silly out-of-date restrictions. If mixed meetings were organized the women would be a tremendous counter-attraction to the men, and I believe they would draw in the crowds and add greatly to gate money. Women might also be inspired to greater performances if they met as all athletes together.

What is the reason for the sort of purdah in which women athletes perform in England? Certainly it is due to the fact that the male rulers of athletics still cling to Edwardian ideas. Set the women free! In every other country of importance women are on equal athletic

terms, although of course they can never compete against men for obvious reasons which can't be altered. In some countries this equality is carried to lengths which even I can't approve of. It is not unusual in France and the USSR, for example, for dressing-rooms to be equally available to men and women. Men are liable to walk into a shower or a massage room and find it occupied by a more or less nude female. And, I suppose, vice versa. Nobody seems to mind. If this is carrying sex equality too far, I think it is time women rose in rebellion against the humiliating rule of Olympic Games which dictates that they must provide medical proof that they are in fact women. The rule is not only humiliating; it is absurd and useless. It is a silly bit of the cold war, obviously aimed at the beefy women Russia sends abroad. But if the Russians wanted to send a man to compete in women's events what would be easier than to provide him with a medical certificate saying he was a woman? In Russia, where women do the hardest manual work, they naturally produce some beefy creatures whose physique looks oddly unfeminine to us. But certificates are no safeguard. So, let's scrap them.

From what I have seen of the behaviour of most women at international meetings, there is no doubt whatever of their sex. As far as I am concerned, no further proof is needed. By that I imply no slur. I mean that they are obviously feminine.

Finally, one man's view on how British women athletes dress. If our girls are behind the rest of the world in athletic prowess, they are certainly well ahead in the scantiness of their running garments. Perhaps I am a bit of a puritan, but I am certainly not a prude, and I have been quite shocked sometimes by the display of female form in those flimsy bikini-style briefs and vests. It seems to be unnecessary showing off. And these too-short shorts do not display a woman to advantage, particularly from the back. Sometimes they look to me downright indecent. They certainly don't need certificates!

Other nationals don't go to such extremes. I remember how one prominent English girl in Australia wore shorts which by English standards were much longer than average. She was warned by the Australians for having shorts that were too short.

I imagine I can hear the howl of rage that my views will arouse. But remember, girls, I married a champion and I'm all for women athletes. I want to see them taking a higher opinion of themselves—and beating the world's best.

Chapter 8

WHAT WENT WRONG IN ROME?

DESPITE endless argument, the truth of what went wrong with the Rome Olympic Games of 1960 has not been faced by the nabobs and pundits of British athletics. They don't want to face the facts, which add up to an overwhelming case for drastic changes in our attitude to international events and in the organization of future Olympic Games. Yet if those changes do not come Britain will fail equally dismally next time in Japan, while the Games themselves will degenerate into dangerous displays of nationalistic flag-waving, petty political rivalries and ballyhoo gone mad.

It must be said in fairness that Britain was by no means alone in being bitterly disappointed with the performance of her athletes. The Americans were dismayed too; so were the French and the Australians. They were all wondering where the medals had gone and why. I think the underlying reason for disappointment was the same in all cases. And the first ugly fact to face is that the Rome Games were not organized in the best interests of sport and athletics, but in the interest of local politics and economics. Such extraneous motives have bedevilled Olympic Games before, but never to the extent they did in Rome. Anyone who looks honestly at the Rome Games must realize that they served primarily to boost the Italian tourism industry. They were fixed for August, which everyone knows is the dead season in Rome. The sultry and oppressive heat then makes life almost impossible even to the Romans. Every citizen of the Eternal City who can afford to get the hell out of it in August does so—and has done so since ancient times. August 1960 was no exception. The great majority of prosperous Romans hardly knew the Games were going on. They were at the seaside or in the country—anywhere but in Rome. In

the stands at the Stadium most of the nations on earth were represented by an influx of visitors. Normally it is a time when foreign visitors are scarce. Hence the temptation to fix the Games to fill this dead tourist season.

But why did the nations of the world fall for it? To get the answer one must study the international ruling body which governs the Games, and the traditions it has allowed to grow up. Its members are for the most part elderly men who have attained eminence and mean to stay at the top. They accept at each Games a recommendation for a venue and a date for the next Games four years ahead. At the end of each Games a representative of the city next chosen ceremonially accepts the Olympics banner. For this city it is not only an honour but a source of great wealth and national prestige. The wishes of the next hosts tend to prevail. Hence the slogan, 'Come to Rome in sunny August.' Were the interests of the athletes even considered in this international jockeying for advantage? Was there any British protest at the date in Rome? We shall probably never know.

Of course it is not impossible for athletes to give their best even in a Roman August. But it does demand the most careful and scientific preparation and acclimatization, particularly for athletes from temperate climates. And the next question to be asked is why British track and field athletes were not so acclimatized. The answer is they were not allowed to get to Rome early enough. Why? Because the British Olympics Association lacked foresight and were not prepared to pay the money necessary to keep our team training there three weeks before the event. The athletes themselves were not consulted. They never are. Some of them, realizing how vulnerable they would be if they arrived at the last minute, begged the British authorities to let them go to Rome earlier at their own expense. They were not allowed to. Les Truelove, the British team manager, insisted that we should all assemble at the same time. Take my own case. I had been training at Gerschler's institute at Freiburg, where the temperature reached 90 degrees. I wanted to go direct to Rome; but Truelove insisted that I should return to England's 55-degree climate to assemble with the rest. And from chilly London I was thrust the next day into Rome's furnace of 116 degrees. No wonder my body was at sixes and sevens.

I will quote many other examples at Rome of the damaging effect of such sudden temperature changes. After all, the scientific facts about acclimatization of athletes were on record and there could be

no dispute about them. For two years a committee of the British Medical Association, for which Roger Bannister did distinguished work, had studied the problem. Bannister carried out a great deal of research on it in Aden where he was an RAF doctor, and where he tested many Service athletes in that sticky climate. The report of the BMA committee was sent to the British Olympics Association who forwarded it to all the other Olympics bodies. So the officials knew the facts. Not so the athletes and the general public, for the report was never published. After the Games, when a row blew up about our team's arriving so late, and there was an attempt to establish who was to blame, the British Athletics Board, the British Olympics Association and the BMA would not say what advice the medical report gave. But it was apparent from the discreet silence that someone had either committed a gross error of judgment or ignored the medical facts.

Apart from medical enquiries, athletes know from instinct and experience that they require time to acclimatize. Frank Salvat was one of those who begged to be allowed to go to Rome early at his own expense. Truelove refused him permission. Salvat told me that he was assured he need not worry about the heat in Rome. Better than anyone else Don Thompson, the heroic British walker who won our only gold medal in the field and track events, realized the need for acclimatization. The pathetic story of the way he submitted himself to a fearful ordeal of heat in his bathroom at home was revealed later. But Thompson did not have to face his great 50-kilometre walk in that first blazing week at Rome. He won in the second week, when the temperature had dropped from 116 degrees to 86 degrees and it was so chilly by comparison that I wore two tracksuits.

To rebut the allegation that our late arrival at the Games was the cause of our failure, the Germans were cited. They, too, came late, we were reminded. True, but it was conveniently forgotten that for two weeks before they arrived there had been a terrific heat-wave in Germany. Most of the other teams gave their athletes plenty of time. The New Zealanders were there a month before, the Australians three weeks before, the Americans two weeks before. If you doubt my case, contrast the failure of our runners with what happened to the British cyclists, swimmers, rowers and canoeists. They all got to Rome two weeks before the Games, and their performances in the

events were normal and according to expectations. But their reaction to the climate was exactly the same as that of the runners. They told me that for the first five days they suffered a terrific loss of form. They hit rock-bottom on the fifth day and said that if they had been forced to perform then they would have finished last. It took them until the tenth day to get back to normal.

Now turn to the British runners who failed to win a medal or get into the top six in any event from 800 m to 10,000 m. The 5,000 m was run on our fourth day in Rome, and Frank Salvat, Bruce Tulloh and I couldn't raise a gallop between us. We were at rock-bottom of our form. Yet on past performance we could all have qualified.

I wasn't too nervous before the heats because I was confident of qualifying. I had studied the list of runners in my heat on the notice-board in the team quarters. One by one I ticked off those I knew I could beat. It was not a matter of conceit but of cold, hard facts. In the end the only person without a tick against his name was me. Even so, I was not off guard. I was prepared to run hard to qualify in a good time to give me the lift to race a great final. Then, when that was successfully behind me, there was the 10,000 m to follow.

I was drawn in the third heat of the 5,000 m. In the tunnel that led out to the Olympic track I felt that edginess you always experience before a big race. I wanted to be out there and getting on with it. The runners from the previous heats appeared, a hot, bedraggled group. Their ordeal was over, and you could tell from their manner whether they had made the final. Luigi Conti was dancing around with a group of his countrymen. He had succeeded with a new Italian record and it was really good to see his exuberant pleasure. I picked out Frank Salvat, British 3-mile champion. His face was crimson.

"How did you get on?" I asked him.

"Bloody awful," he growled and stalked off down the tunnel, breathing fire and probably thinking about a pint of beer.

I thought how cruel it was that Frank had not been able to run his usual race, for he should have won his heat quite easily. I did not know then that he wasn't edged out of the final—but that he had in fact run more than 30 s slower than usual. I thought, "Poor old Frank"—never realizing that this same fate awaited me in a few minutes.

As I jogged out into the arena I felt confident and strong. In a short while I should be putting on my track suit having made the final. But when we raced round the first bend I sensed immediately that

something was wrong. From the first half-lap I was struggling to keep up with the field and one by one they moved past me. I had to run very hard to keep up, and after about a mile (one-third the distance) I realised that I'd had it. I kept forcing myself on but the others drew away irresistibly. At half-way I was virtually out of the fight, and at two miles it was all over for me. What a terrible blow this was, because I knew I could run faster than that when out for a training jaunt. I was in a dilemma. I couldn't stop running, for the most important thing in every race is to finish it, win or lose.

That was the longest race I have run. The first three, Janke of Germany, Bernard of France, whom I had beaten by 80 yards at London's White City a few weeks before, and little Albie Thomas from Australia, were racing for the finishing line as I watched from the far side of the track—300 yards behind. I jogged that last half-lap, for I had to accept this horrible situation and absorb the hard facts slowly. The arena was silent, and I walked back across the grass looking up at the flags above the far end of the stadium.

I was not tired—nothing was wrong with me physically. It wasn't even too hot in the stadium then, for the sun had gone down. But I was boiling with rage and frustration, and if I had met an official of the British Amateur Athletic Board then there would have been a blazing row. It was next day when I met Jack Crump. He said, "Well, old boy, I'm afraid you overtrained." Overtrained! He did not even know what training I had done.

"What about Tulloh and Salvat? Did they train too much as well? You talk nonsense," I answered.

Take the case of Bruce Tulloh. His great British 3-mile record of 13 min 17·2 s would have given him a medal in Rome, for it is as good as 13 min 44 s for 5,000 m. (Statisticians please note.) What happened to Bruce in Rome? He ran with terrific courage against the adverse condition of his body, but he was 30 s slower than his form, and I had to carry him off after saving him from falling into the moat surrounding the track. He lay for half an hour in the dressing-room being sponged down. Even then he was prettygroggy for several hours. I am convinced the British 5,000-m runners could easily have taken on any trio in the world in a team race and won it. I am certain all three of us in Rome could have made the final if we had been there two weeks before the competition.

Imagine my feelings when I was asked to go before the television

cameras immediately on leaving the stadium after the race. What would you have felt like? Well, I had to bottle up my feelings. I have learned to be philosophical and to accept things as they come. For me the Olympics were just another race after all.

But I was really happy to see my friend Murray Halberg win that marvellous 5,000-m final for New Zealand—the race I ought not to have been watching. Of course it had its tragic side for me, for I never had the chance to be out there running with Halberg and perhaps giving him the pleasure of beating me. I did not see Murray for a couple of days after the 5,000 m. When we met neither of us spoke. I went up to him and gave him a hell of a handshake and we looked each other squarely in the eye. I felt a lump in my throat.

Incidentally, his victory seemed to me to disprove once more the theory that you can train to be on the peak of form for a particular day. You have to be strong and fast for weeks and months at a time. I trained and associated with the New Zealanders and their coach, Arthur Lydiard, who told me Halberg had trained to be at his peak for the 10,000 m, not the 5,000 m. The New Zealanders were convinced Halberg would win the longer distance by an even greater margin than he had won the 5,000 m. Yet everyone knows Halberg was a very creditable 5th placer in the 10,000 m. I believe we shall still see Murray Halberg take the world record for this distance if he drops this 'peak' nonsense and trains normally. Murray and I trained together a little before the 10,000 m. During one of these outings he said, "Well, Gordon, I sincerely hope we have a terrific race in the 10,000 m. I would like you and me to race up the straight neck-and-neck so that we can see which of us is the better."

This cheered me up when I was naturally feeling low. About this time I heard of the death from a blood disease of my friend Hec Hogan, the Australian sprinter, with whom I had spent hours trying to catch fish on the Norwegian fjords. By a strange irony Hogan, who as I write is still credited as co-holder of the world 100-yds record, died actually while the 100 m was being raced at Rome. He was the same age as myself. I comforted myself by saying that any rate I was lucky to be alive and that I must worry about such unimportant things as gold medals.

However, those days between the 5,000 m and the 10,000 m were a fierce ordeal. I had to bear the brunt of those incessant inquests by press and public. Every newspaperman wanted to know personally

what had gone wrong with me and many of them wrote a great deal of twaddle. The gist of the stories was that Pirie had overtrained, or even that Pirie was finished. I tried to be patient and hold back my instinct to answer back, and this restraint of emotion is very bad for any athlete's morale.

The day before the 10,000 m I met Basil Heatley, the British cross-country champion who would have raced in Rome but for an unfortunate leg injury. "Basil," I said, "I'm so fed up now that I'm not fit to race tomorrow. If I only had the chance I would let you take my place." This is an example of how irresponsible press criticism of an athlete at a critical time can damage his morale. Another example at Rome was Mary Bignal, who was subjected to constant interference in her private affairs by the press when stories were put about that she was having a love affair with a Dutch athlete. It upset her terribly, and Mary could hardly protest herself. I feel that she lost the gold medal in the long jump because she was so utterly miserable and unhappy with the gossip about her. She is still liable to boil at the mere thought of that business.

Harry Jerome, the coloured Canadian sprint champion, was another case. He had run a world-record 100 m just before the Games in 10 s flat. This was equal to Olympics champion Armin Hary's world record. Jerome was joint favourite for the gold medal before the race, but some irresponsible writers cast doubt on the validity of his record time. He was naturally furious. Then he pulled a muscle in his leg. He should not have tried to race in Rome, but he did and of course he pulled up lame. Then critics had the insolence to write that he stopped because he was scared and lacked guts. He was ready to give up his career when I had a long talk with him in the Olympic Village. I urged him that the only reply he could make to his critics was to redouble his efforts and get his 100-m time down to 9·9 s. Whether my pep talk had the desired effect remains to be seen. I hope so.

Let's examine the situation before the 10,000 m in Rome. The world rankings were:

1. Halberg (N.Z.) 28 min 48·0 s
2. Power (Australia) 28 min 52·8 s (converted from 6-miles time)
3. Grodotski (E. Germany) 28 min 57·8 s
4. Bolotnikov (USSR) 28 min 58·2 s
5. Desyatchikov (USSR) 29 min

Halberg seemed obviously the favourite. Bolotnikov? Well, he had suffered ups and downs in his form. His average time was 29 min 10 s—slower than I had run. Also, his 5,000-m results through the season were not impressive. I did not believe he was in a class to win, let alone approach Kuts's world record. The same applied to the other Russian, Desyatchikov. They were solid 'labourer-type' runners. Dave Power seemed the danger man along with Kryskoviak the Pole.

For myself, although I was not happy about the race at the start, I was delighted to find myself running excellently once again and I quickly moved up to Halberg along with the others. Up to 5,000 m I was confident of winning a medal. The 5,000-m time was 14 min 22 s, and thus it seemed to be following the pattern I had anticipated, with a second-half a little slower, to make the winner's time 28 min 46 s, the same as Kuts's Olympic record. That would be excellent for those warm conditions, I thought as I prowled along with Halberg. The leading group started to move away as they fought and I imagined that Halberg was holding back and saving his energy. We continued at a smart pace for the next mile or so and the leaders had now stolen some 80 yards on us.

It was about then I realized that if we were to catch up either the front men must fade very quickly or we would need a racing car. I was sick with disappointment and angry because I had deluded myself with too many calculations. In the last two Olympics I cast all cares to the winds and raced for the lead. This time I thought I would be wiser, and maybe lost as a result. My fragile shell of reassurance and confidence which the good start gave me now fell apart and I shambled to an inglorious personal best time of 29 min 15 s.

There was of course a great deal of bitter comment on the doubtful tactics used by the Russians to ensure that Grodotski did not have a fair chance to win the gold medal. As they entered the final lap Desyatchikov impeded Grodotski for half the lap, preventing him from attempting to catch Bolotnikov. Meanwhile Zhukov, a lap behind, brazenly paced Bolotnikov to victory. This race was the climax of a series of incidents involving the Russians in mysterious achievements which seemed to bear no reference to their normal form. Bolotnikov's time for the race was 28 min 32·2 s, 26 seconds better than he had done before. It seemed inexplicable because he had been run off his feet in slower times. Looking back down the years we had a similar happening with Kuts in London in 1957. Before he raced 10,000 m. I saw Kuts

in the dressing room. He was in agony and doubled up holding his stomach. He ran what was a slow time for him, and he was in pain in the dressing room again after the race. He had avoided Ibbotson and myself in the 5,000 m, where we easily beat Bolotnikov. The following week in Moscow, Bolotnikov disposed of Kuts in the 10,000 m by about a foot. Both clocked 29 min 10 s. Not spectacular, but this is the strange thing—two days later Kuts beat Bolotnikov by 150 yards in the 5,000 m with a time of 13 min 48·6 s. Bolotnikov was a startled second in practically the same time as his London effort. What happened to Kuts to account for his transition from almost an invalid to a superman in a week?

That wasn't the end of the story, for he ran three more races, clocking fabulous times, and finally broke my world record in Rome in October with 13 min 35 s. He never ran another good race after that day. Russian athletes told me that Kuts tried very hard after 1957 to regain his form but he couldn't do anything but a miserable time. One told me that in 1958 they could stick needles into his legs after he had run and he felt no pain. The mystery of this great runner's downfall had been the subject of endless speculation and it remains a mystery to this day, but I believe the Russians influence their athletes' performances by external stimulants either psychological or physical.

To a lesser extent there is the case of Zhukov, who in 1958 ran some great times in the European championships and then faded into an ordinary runner. This, of course, is the penalty State athletes have to pay. They are forced on and on into obscurity because there is always another one to follow like a meteor. The individual does not count.

But to get back to Rome. The British were not the only athletes who were knocked out by the Roman August. I met Harold Connelly, the American hammer thrower and Melbourne Olympics champion, just before the Games. He had recently thrown a fantastic world record of 230 ft 9 in. He told me, "My God, it's hot in Rome. You daren't even go out at midday. There are going to be some terrific surprises." There was a surprise in his own case when he didn't get in the first six. Another surprise was Janus Sidlo, the Polish javelin thrower. He was second in the Melbourne Games and had emerged as the dominating figure in his line because of his consistent form in 1960. He didn't make the final.

Neither did the Polish discus champion, Piatowski, and his failure

was also attributed to the heat. He threw a world record earlier in the season, which was equalled a few weeks later by Rink Babka of USA. The anticipated duel between these two did not materialize, and Babka finished third. In none of these cases where an athlete failed to make his form was it suggested that he had overtrained. Yet the old parrot cry which had echoed in my ears for years was repeated again to account for my failure.

There were many other factors beside the sultry heat, which upset the competitors in Rome and proved once more that their interests took second place on such occasions. The Italian organizers sacrificed everything to the theatrical splendour of the event as if they were producing one of those mammoth Hollywood epics for the screen. The nationalistic ballyhoo reached a new peak of folly. The athletes were the victims of over-organization which treated them like naughty little boys and girls instead of men and women who had striven intensely to be at their best. We were all given time-tables two days ahead showing exactly what was expected of us. Yet we were forced to report 40 minutes before every event in which we were entered, and 20 minutes before the 'off' we were all called together and herded in the tunnels under the Stadium where there was hardly room to move. This was just the time when a highly-strung athlete wanted to be warming up for his ordeal. We had to sit on benches and often on the floor to be checked and counted. There wasn't even a chance to jog up and down. Then when we got on the track, instead of spending the last few minutes in running round and loosening up with a sprint, we had to be checked and counted again to make sure we hadn't escaped or absconded. Such treatment for athletes who had trained to the limit for just that moment of time was utterly ridiculous and insulting. The fussiness of the officials no doubt ministered to their own importance, but how little they understood the needs of the athletes whom they were hounding about.

The hordes of officials and the press photographers were obviously more important than the athletes. They constantly got in the way and swarmed all over the place while we were being regimented. Here is something which should not be allowed to happen at Tokyo.

Then there was the running track. To quote John Merriman after the 10,000 m, "It was bloody awful." And I agreed with him. So was the track at the Melbourne Games. It takes a year for a new track to settle down to the right composition and consistency. The Rome

track was a nightmare for a good deal of the meeting. Instead of being firm so that only the spikes of your shoes stick in, it was almost as loose as sand and so kicked up as you ran. When the track was criticized officials rushed to defend it by pointing out that on it Berutti equalled the 200-m world record, that Otis Davis and Karl Kaufmann set up a new world record for 400 m and that Herb Elliott ran a world-record 1,500 m. What they did not mention was that these achievements came just after the track had been flooded by a cloudburst and thunderstorm overnight. The water firmed the track for a while and made it excellent, but as soon as it dried out it was as bad as before. I should add that it is possible to run a world record on a bad track. I have done so myself, but an Olympics track should be perfect.

I hope somebody will tackle the Tokyo track in good time, for it is a little detail which officials are apt to overlook. Those who remember Helsinki know what an Olympics track should be. It was immaculate. So was that at the Empire Games at Cardiff where it was in the care of that splendidly expert groundsman, McTaggart.

Many people summed up the 1960 Olympics as the greatest ever. And, judged as a public spectacle from the visitors' point of view, no doubt they were. They had the enormous advantage of the grandeur of Rome as a theatrical backcloth. In such a setting the event must have been unforgettably splendid to the visitor. But, viewed from the point of view of the athletes, it was not so satisfactory. Very few teams were happy when it was time to go home. The noise in the Olympic Village was shattering to the nerves. Television sets were blaring until late at night; cars, motor scooters and lorries were competing for an unofficial Olympics noise title; and competitors on the binge added to the unrest.

But in the village the athletes are all friends regardless of nationality, colour or creed, and our noisy world was a place of wonderful comradeship. It often took me an age to walk from the dressing-rooms to the flats because there were so many old friends to greet and exchange notes with. Their friendliness made up for all the hard work and disappointments. It was a pity that this Olympics spirit was not shared by the spectators.

The crowds at Helsinki and Melbourne were wonderful compared with the partisan, chanting, flag-waving lot in the Rome stadium who only yelled for their own team. Competitors deserve applause for their performance, not because of their nationality.

My main worry at Rome was to get my ration of sleep, and at last I got it when I was allowed to sleep-out in a friend's flat where it was relatively cool and quiet.

You can have all this national ballyhoo, this flag-waving, these uniforms, these parades, these bands. I don't think they add one bit to the athlete's pride or his performance. I should like to sweep them away and let us all compete in a simple athletic kit suited to the job as tennis champions do. They don't need to be spurred on to victory by partisan displays.

My performances in the Games might as well have been published in the obituary columns of the British press. As far as they were concerned I was athletically stone-dead and finished. But I received hundreds of letters from well-wishers who told me to ignore the criticisms and to stick it. In my next meeting after Rome I thanked my loyal supporters with my first four-minute mile.

Chapter 9

THE NAUGHTY BOY WHO KEPT ON RUNNING

Now I turn the clock back to tell of my early days, with the object of showing the mental and physical development of an athlete.

I can only vaguely remember Yorkshire, where I was born. Surrey is the real place of my childhood, and at first my life there was spoilt by the taunts of other children. "You talk funny, mate," they jeered. This was because of my Yorkshire accent. But I soon forgot both the jeers and the accent, and my brothers and I had a wonderful time in the woods and fields around Coulsdon.

Alick Pirie, my athletic father, was anxious that we should live in the country, and he chose Coulsdon, which was then countrified, because the South London Harriers' HQ is there. In those quiet days of pre-war England, our family of six was accustomed to long walks at the week-end, sometimes up to 20 miles provided there was a country inn to satisfy thirsts at the end of the journey.

We played all the tricks one expects of urchins but, because there is room to spare in the country, we did not clash with the law or the local population except on rare occasions. In summer holidays I worked for the nearby tea rooms on Farthing Downs, where coach-loads of children came for the giant slide, the swings and the fresh air. Bicycles took us round the Surrey countryside. There were always more bodies than bicycles, so we managed two or three per machine. This was the set-up once as we raced down the slope at White Hills. Round the next corner a steam roller was chugging across the centre of the lane. The only alternative was a thicket of brambles and hawthorn bushes. Three bodies crashed into that welcoming thicket, thankful to be saved from worse.

When the war was our close neighbour, our thoughts turned towards more dangerous objects. Our studies at Purley Grammar School were interrupted continually by air-raids. A great deal of our time was spent playing cards in the air-raid shelters, but after school hours we went souvenir-hunting to the danger of ourselves and others. The school was a barter house for the things we found—such as bullets and bombs. I had a large collection of hand-grenades, bullets, cannon-shells and bombs pinched from crashed planes, and was in constant fear of the police. Once I hid all my souvenirs under the next-door hedge. After school my mother met me at the door saying, "What have you been up to?" Apparently, the police had been next door. There was a hand-grenade on the lawn, and they took quite a while removing it carefully. I could have told them it had no explosive in it!

German flares dropped in a wood at Old Coulsdon and some failed to ignite. The air-raid wardens visited these dangerous objects every hour. One evening, after school time, they saw a flare disappearing in the woods on the backs of six schoolboys. I was one of them. We pick-axed the casing open. One fellow had the parachute, one the case, another some of the inflammable core, while I had the time fuse, a complicated and dangerous-looking red steel tube containing a mechanism with two plungers which would shoot out a few seconds before it exploded. The police caught up with us but we were saved by a woman magistrate on the bench at Wallington Juvenile Court. We were let off with a caution and 7s. 6d. costs to pay.

I remember setting the woods on fire, cutting down trees, being chased by policemen and night watchmen, putting coins on the railway lines and smoking in the cellar of an empty house. I was already doing some cross-country running, and I recall running in the fields when German planes came over. School cross-country runs started because the rugby pitches were flooded. There was an alternative—extra studying. This meant there were plenty of runners on sports afternoons. I was lucky to be one of the best runners in the Sports Day outings, and in cross-country races I did well against boys my superior in age and size. We had a very good athletics team at Purley Grammar, seldom losing our matches against other schools. When we did lose it was generally because our best team men were forced to play rugby, which took precedence. My elder brother, Peter, was school captain.

As in most English schools, the boys did no training for Sports Day

until the last few weeks. This resulted in the fellows hating athletics because they associated it with stiff legs, dizzy heads and sickness due to their bad condition. While we were still at school my father introduced Peter and me to the South London Harriers. My eldest brother, Ian, had been signed-on at the age of two months. This was because my father was the club secretary. My club activities started on Belmont Downs, Surrey, where half-a-dozen youngsters turned out every Saturday. We changed in a small wooden hut and washed under a cold tap when it wasn't too frosty. There I saw John Parlett and Derek Burfitt—only boys then, but great runners in later years.

These Saturday runs were quite a test for us because we had to cycle the 8 miles to and from Belmont and run 5 miles on the Downs. You had to be keen to spend your Saturday afternoons this way, especially when it was frosty or raining. We were coached by Billy Holt and encouraged by older members of the club. They were South London Harriers' slender life-line through the war years, when our Coulsdon HQ was taken over by the Air Raid Precautions people. At the end of the war we returned to Coulsdon, but only to use the scouts' hut at Coulsdon South Station. Before these runs we filled tin baths and buckets with water and left them on the stove to heat up while we ran. Despite these difficulties, SLH produced champion youth teams, and my brother Peter was National Youths Champion in 1947—a good example to people who bleat about lack of facilities.

I couldn't understand why, when we returned to our HQ, the local authorities, having had the use of our hall all through the war, refused to rent us a fine concrete building containing showers and bathing facilities.

In later school years, I ran through the woods for half an hour, sometimes five days a week. I had successes, such as winning the Great Britain Air Training Corps 1-mile championship. That was my first race and record at the White City Stadium—a modest 4 min 42 s.

I watched some big meetings of those days, and saw Sidney Wooderson run a new British 3-mile record. I never imagined that particular record would stand until I broke it myself five years afterwards. Others I saw were Arthur Wint, McDonald Bailey, Doug. Wilson and many foreign visitors, but, somehow, I was not really enthused. I took part in athletics merely to beat boys at the club or at school. Each improvement in my ability was met by a defeat in some championship or other. I was always the 'also ran' in those days.

A boy who frequently beat me was 'Stumpy' Green, a battling, ginger-haired runner from Reading AC. I seemed to meet him everywhere I raced, and he always won. He became one of the leading runners in England before he retired. I suppose this was my good luck because I never once had the chance to sit back and relax. I didn't have any laurels to rest on. Thus developed little by little my determination to try harder.

Looking back down the years, I can see that I always had this failing of never reaching the top. You can run a world record one day and lose the very next race if you are not twice as determined to do better. Also, in English athletics, one has to race through twelve months of the year in top gear. I wonder whether this is the real reason for the British lack of gold medals?

I greatly admired those boys who made an all-out effort even if they finished last. One particular boy at school always collapsed after a race or appeared in the dressing room to tell us he had been sick on finishing. He wasn't any good at running but he really had guts that put to shame the fitter types, who dropped out when the going got harder with such excuses as: "Oh, I was rather bored." They didn't have any guts.

My studies suffered because of my laziness in school work, or rather because I preferred to play table tennis, or to take part in other activities at the local youth club when I wasn't running. I failed my mock matriculation exam in 1947 and was put on my mettle by the headmaster, who called on me to pay my entrance fee for the examination. He gave me a chance to appeal. "What will you pass in?" he queried. I stood up and said, "Everything." That convinced him, and I didn't have to pay the fee after all.

What I did was to gather up my books and do three to four hours' homework every night for nearly two months. Remember, I failed badly in that mock examination, so I had to work hard, particularly as my schoolmates were eagerly waiting for my results after I had been so cocky. One of the masters told the class that Pirie might as well not sit for the final chemistry exam. This taunt, like my athletic defeats, was a great spur, and I studied chemistry—which I hated—until the formulae drifted through my thoughts day and night. I was determined to make the best possible marks I could. I gained one distinction, three credits and four passes, the passes including that deadly chemistry. Looking back, I realize I missed my chances at

school, for I could have studied more and perhaps have gone to a University. But it was never impressed on me at school what all the business of education was about. I tell many youngsters who write to me for advice on athletics and studies to concentrate as hard as they can on attaining the highest possible standards at school, but to pursue their athletics to rest their minds from studying. My schooldays were never serious enough. We were always playing the fool and laughing about crazy things. These happy times ended abruptly in 1948, when I failed Higher Schools Certificate and was plunged into Life.

Lloyds Bank was my first employer, and I wore myself out with the other thousands of unfortunates who travel to and from the city offices year in, year out, till their health fails them. The fumes in Threadneedle Street were pretty putrid; but for the charming people I worked with—and I really mean that—I would not have remained in London. The work was very agreeable, but bank clerks were always criticized if they were five minutes late and were never paid overtime, even if they stayed until 10 p.m.

Athletics were, of course, restricted to foggy, rainy evenings and were not much fun. On dark winter nights we had to run round the roads or spend hours travelling to Tooting Common, which was floodlit only two days a week. My age-group was dominated by three characters—the 'Stumpy' Green I have already mentioned, Walter Hesketh, the powerful youth from Manchester, and Eddie Ellis, of Thames Valley Harriers. I couldn't win races because these fellows were constantly turning up to show me round.

I know now that they all trained extremely hard with sprinting or time trials, so they earned their successes. For my part, I ran on the roads at a steady speed. This was a godsend for, with the odd exception, teenage athletes who develop early do so by sacrificing great performances in maturity. This is because the body must have all its strength for growth and proper development up to the age of 20. 'Stumpy' Green always told us in the dressing-rooms that he had not trained for a couple of months or so—but, my goodness, it didn't look that way when the gun was fired!

There are two types of athletes. They don't differ in size or muscular development. There is no apparent difference at all. But one type can run a terrific speed without training; he does 10·5 s for 100 yds at school and he can continue this terrific speed up to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile—he probably manages 24 s for the 220 and 51 s for the 440. These fellows can't

run slowly when they try. That is always an amazing thing to me. Take the other type—and I fall into this category: we can't do the 100 in 12 s, or the 220 in 30 s or the 440 in 60 s. We are able only through torturous efforts to improve our speed, but with the slightest lay-off this hard-won ability vanishes.

The first type of runner will always be the greatest. If he will train hard, he can race nearly any world record, and I predict that this type of athlete will knock the records for six in the future. Herb Elliott is the first man of the speedy type to train and race the longer distances. I believe that, if he is interested, he will be able to make a clean sweep of all the records from 1,500 m to a marathon.

The second type of runner is the fellow who flogs and flogs himself to great heights and is liable to fall quickly. But he can't possibly compete with the speed man. Trainers tell us that if you only do 'so-and-so' you can run much faster. But I have tried every 'so-and-so' method, and I can assure anyone that it is not so.

In my bank clerks' world of 1948–49, I was a thin, pallid youth, and my ambitions were only sparked off in the August of '48 when I ran in the Olympic torch relay with my father and watched the Games. The Olympics were just another meeting to me, only more people went to watch. I was not particularly enthusiastic about any race until the 10,000-m event came on. I knew a lot about the form of the runners and only had eyes for an athlete from Czechoslovakia—Emil Zatopek. A month previously he had run within 3 s of the world record for 10,000 m. He was, in my opinion, the winner before they started.

The three Finnish runners, led by Heino, the world-record holder, took the lead from the gun. The spectators enthused about the stylish Finns but I pointed out Zatopek, running at the back of the field, apparently in his death throes. The people around thought I was crazy. Time showed, however, for after some laps the others tired and Zatopek was in the lead. He murdered Heino with a couple of sprints. Heino shook his head and dropped out. I stood in my seat watching Zatopek intently for lap after lap of the race. His forceful style had the crowd on their feet too, and yelling their heads off.

This tremendous dynamo of a man sparked off something inside me, and I went home to start on the road to emulate Zatopek. I missed the other days at the Olympics for I was concerned only in running to be a great champion like Zatopek. Emil, as I know him

personally now, would have talked to me for hours then, for he is as enthusiastic about helping others as he is about running them off their feet. He won that race at Wembley in a new Olympics record of 29 min 59·6 s. He returned to England to race again seven years later and clocked 30 s faster. But he lost to Gordon Pirie because in 1948 he had set the example and sparked off the ambition within me.

Chapter 10

PROGRESS OF THE PLODDING AIRMAN

DURING my two years of National Service in the RAF, beginning in June 1949, I progressed from a junior club athlete to one of the leading track runners in Britain. Here is an indication of this progress in figures of my best times.

	1 mile	3 miles
1949	4 min 32·6 s	nil
1950	4 min 19·5 s	15 min 5·2 s
1951	4 min 14·4 s	14 min 3 s

In the Service I soon discovered that by marching smartly out with my athletic kit under my arm to the nearest gym I could avoid drill or battle courses. The NCOs eventually took this for granted, and often I was ordered to report to the gym for training if I paraded for the battle course. In July I was instructed to report at once to RAF Halton to join the Air Force Athletics team, but only as a reserve.

The Inter-Services championships were interesting but I was straining at the leash for bigger things than being in reserve. The mile was won by Captain Morris by a yard from Lance-Bombadier Disley, with AAA junior champ Eddie Ellis third and a ginger-haired Second Lieut. fourth. Ellis was the idol of most junior middle-distance runners, for he was outstanding. Thus, it was flattering for me when the ginger-haired Second Lieut. approached and asked me whether I was Ellis. I was sorry to have to tell him I was Pirie. I discovered later that this fellow's name was Chataway. The 3 miles was a great struggle between Walter Hesketh and my brother Peter, both of whom had won national titles in previous years. Hesketh received an ovation when he finally won a hard fought battle by 40 yds.

I was posted to Cranwell Radio School, Lincolnshire, at the end of September. Sporting facilities were excellent although the cadets of the RAF college had prior claim to most of them. This did not affect us cross-country runners, for we trained far and wide over the fields. Under Warrant Officer Ernie Harrison's captaincy we had a first-class team. My brother Peter, who was RAF 3-mile champ, Mike Doherty, a RAF Blue, and a group of above-average team men, made us a formidable combination. Ernie Harrison was a veteran, and his advice to me at Cranwell was invaluable. He was responsible for my concentrating on short races at a critical time in my physical development. I owe a lot to Ernie for his steadying influence and wise direction.

The winter of 1949–50 was well filled with athletic matches, mainly against other RAF stations in Lincolnshire. Our team was strong enough to win all the races despite my brother's demobilization in November. Ernie Harrison gave me a close fight whenever we raced. In one match at RAF Scampton the course cut diagonally across the aerodrome, and I arrived on the runway just as an Avro Lincoln came in to land. I broke the course record that afternoon.

Eliminating races for the RAF Cross-country Championships were held in February and March on dates which clashed with the major cross-country title races. The RAF would not change this arrangement or allow us to concentrate on the civilian races. As a result of racing twice a week in the peak of the season—February and March—the Service runners suffered from sudden loss of form. In my case I won all the eliminating races together with the RAF and Southern junior titles. But by the week of the National Cross-country I was mentally exhausted and I finished 20th, several minutes behind others whom I had been beating quite easily.

In February, I passed my exams and was posted as a wireless mechanic to the Gunnery School at Watchet, Somerset. I hitch-hiked from there to St. Athan in South Wales for the RAF Cross-country Championships. I met my team mates from Cranwell in the disused and condemned barrack blocks of the old camp. Mike Doherty and I walked round the course on the morning of the race but lost our way, arriving back at camp very tired and hungry only 2½ hours before the start. We ate heartily and retired to bed for an hour, convinced that our efforts of the morning ruled out any chance that we might race well.

We woke in time to rush to the start, and to our surprise did extremely well. Mike was sixth, thus making the RAF team, while I won

from John Stone, the Southern England Senior Champion. I was thrilled because that was my first big title, and when the team results were given out we gave a cheer, for Cranwell had won the team race too.

At Watchet I was lucky. From Wing Commander Finney, the commanding officer, down, everyone was helpful, and I went about my training with that essential moral support one needs for a hard task. That was where I laid a strong foundation to my athletic career, for I was able to train unhampered. In fact, I was able to train two, and sometimes three, times a day. This I managed by running at 6.30 a.m., midday and 5 p.m. On my few visits to London and the big-time athletics, I enjoyed successes that were modest by today's standards, but they assured me that results would come by hard work and hard work alone.

But I was looking much further ahead to the day when I would have to match strides with great runners like Zatopek. His picture was on my locker in the billet. He was my inspiration when I was particularly tired with training. Training didn't last long, for my method was to take a strong sprint, get my breath back and sprint again. I followed a regular course across the fields and could only last out at this game for about 50 minutes at one go.

I was regarded as a crank because I went to bed so early. When we had a station dance the fellows returning drunk at 1 am. ripped the bedclothes off me and shouted, "Ten hours sleep, Pirie? You're mad!"

In 1950 the RAF Track Championships demanded a series of eliminating races which I won mainly through lack of opposition. The title race at Uxbridge brought together a strong field for the mile, which included Eddie Ellis, the British junior champ, Mike Doherty and Peter Robinson, the Cambridge Blue. I was the slowest of the lot on paper but probably the most trained and most determined. Despite my confidence I was very nervous.

In the first 100 yds I was left by the others and I had to run hard to keep up, but the field slowed and I was in the lead as we entered the second lap. From then on I ran like a man possessed and forced the pace every yard of the way. My body was exhausted as the bell sounded distantly. The final lap seemed terribly far and at last I reached that wonderful tape first. A few seconds later I felt refreshed again and able to appreciate the drunkenness of success. My time was 4 min 20 s—

my personal best. That was my first track success over Eddie Ellis, who ran third, and it was in no small way due to his example.

Now I looked forward to achieving 4¼ minutes and thus becoming one of the top six milers in Britain. My hopes received a severe jolt. Shortly afterwards I ran in the Inter-Services meeting and, after leading most of the way until the last half-lap, I was beaten quite easily by the ginger-haired Second Lieut. Chataway and Captain Morris, even though I improved my time to 4 min 19·8 s. Back in Somerset I thought carefully about my training. Was I on the wrong track? Was I burning myself out?

I had to make a decision which would determine whether I was to become a champion or not. The question was had I trained too much or not enough? I slept on the problem and woke next morning with the decision already clear in my mind. My training would become harder. I was not sure how, because I thought I had already run myself to the limit. Thus, from 1950 through the winter to 1951 I gradually, with great effort, increased the severity of my training. I ran longer and harder until my legs actually gave way. Many were the times when I had to lie down in the hedgerows to recover and then walk back to camp because I was so exhausted.

To drive myself harder, I imagined that the ginger-haired athlete, who haunted my thoughts, was sprinting past. So I would race like mad to stop him getting ahead. I had marks on the course round which I trained. I ran easily until a mark, then I burst into a tremendous sprint, trying to fly along faster and faster to another mark, after which I shambled along for a few yards gasping for breath. When I tired the phantom competitor drove me on, and I often raced madly beyond the marks. The winter was extremely wet, and the paths I used often turned to quagmires of mud, ankle, and sometimes knee, deep. I wore out a pair of shoes every week or so and had to tie them on with cords round the ankles, for many times I lost them in the mud. This cord kept them on but it cut weals on my ankles. There was terrible conflict between me and my body's exhaustion and the pain in my ankles.

In January, 1951, I returned to London to race in the usual Cross-country Championships. The Surrey Junior was a great success for me. I raced clean away from the field, broke the course record by nearly a minute, and was chosen for the Inter-Counties Cross-country event, my first senior cross-country. The two weeks between these races

passed quickly as I trained my torturing way in the Somerset mud. I imagined I was running the Inter-Counties and sprinting savagely to kill the other runners.

When the day came I ran like mad from the start and was soon leading everyone and drawing away. I ran with the same fire I used in training. After 1½ miles Frank Aaron caught up with me. I was amazed to see that some runners cut the corners. On the second lap I saw from the path which the remainder of the field had left that I was one of the few mugs running the full course. No-one else but Aaron passed me in that race so I became the second best cross-country runner in England. My journey back to Watchet was on wings of joy. My methods had been justified by results. Some critics wrote nonsense about me. They suggested that I was too young and that I should kill myself in a short time. Kill myself be damned, I thought. I'll kill the other runners but never myself. I looked forward to the future with great confidence. I would beat the world.

At the Southern England title event in February I won by two whole minutes, but doubt was expressed by one or two people about my having followed the correct course! An English selector asked whether I would be available to compete for England in the International Championships. I told him I most certainly would be very honoured to run for my country. But my luck was out. On returning to camp I went down with flu and I sweated for five nights under all the bedclothes I could muster. I dared not report sick because I should have been confined to bed for ten days, so losing the chance of running in the National and consequently the International. No one who misses the National is considered for the International. Even England's greatest cross-country champion, Jack Holden, was excluded in this way in 1947.

I went to Catterick for the National Junior with the knowledge that I would not be able to reproduce my best form. I told this to the selector who had spoken to me at the Southern. Walter Hesketh won a grand race, and I was surprised to finish second, for the rest of the field was of a high standard. I was left out of the International, much to my surprise.

In April a Combined Services team was selected to represent Great Britain in the International Military Championships in Freiburg, Southern Germany, and I was lucky to be included. When we arrived in Freiburg at teatime I wanted to train at once, but we had to eat

instead. The others in the team wished to go sightseeing; again I had to join in, but I soon got away from them. Because of the large meal I could not start training until about 10.30 p.m. When the others had gone to bed I was still racing round the track outside. The Frenchmen thought me mad as I ran under the stars at the University sports ground.

On the day of the race we paraded proudly in our crimson track suits adorned with the Combined Services Badge. The French team included several North African athletes who ran in the International Championships which I had missed at Cardiff. The French had won that title, but we were in Freiburg to see that they didn't repeat their performance in this race. Our team of Des Birch (Leeds International), Frank Sando (Army champ), John Stone (Southern champ), Mike Doherty, Bill McMinnis (the Champ of Champs) and myself, comprised a formidable combination. After the parade we jogged to the race start and the others told me to take the left-hand position, the course being anti-clockwise. As they said, "You like to get away fast."

I was left behind in the first mad rush by the French favourites. I was running a race of my own and I wondered whether I would see the others again, for they were quite 50 yds up on me on entering the forest, which hid terrible slopes. As we ascended through the woods I closed up on the field and on the final incline sprinted madly into the lead, running with all my strength. The course dipped back to the stadium, and Franz Herman of Belgium raced past me down the hill—unwisely, I thought, for it jarred the muscles. Herman's sprint didn't pay, for I was in the lead again by the time we reached the stadium, where Sando joined us to make up a trio as we started off on the last lap.

I ran easily for ½ mile and then started to apply the pressure. At first I drew the others on as I moved into top gear. On my second burst I was away, and as their fatigue took control of their bodies I charged off down the paths, gasping for air to fire my muscles to greater efforts. Then I was into the woods and running up those terrible hills again. They seemed much steeper this time, and I dug my toes in hard, not daring to look round because the others were behind, trying to close the gap. At last I ran down the hill and into the stadium. I was International Military Champion. With Sando third and the others close up we won the team race as well. A great day for Britain!

Swimming training pays dividends! The two miles in the British Games of 1952. 9:08.6

Running as a team for Sou
London Harriers in th
London to Brighton Nation
Road Relay Championshi
I am handing over to Pet
Driver at Handcross.

1954, the world record grass-track mile (4 min. 5·2 secs). Brian Hewson was a brilliant second in this, his first competitive mile.

There were only a few weeks left of my Service life. I had enjoyed and benefited so much from being in the RAF that I seriously considered signing on as a physical training instructor. Luckily I did not, for I discovered that my position at Watchet was a sinecure quite unlike the experience of some Service athletes. Peter Clark, in later years, was to be treated most unsympathetically by the RAF when he was developing to be a world beater in 1958.

In June I ran in the RAF Championships during my demobilization leave and was unchallenged in the mile for a new RAF record of 4 min 15·8 s. All this time I had been training relentlessly and progressing steadily. Chataway and Hesketh had beaten me, but I was determined to race as they would never race. I still had some way to go, for Chataway in losing to Parlett at Oxford had run 4 s faster than my best time. This doesn't really surprise me as I look back, for in those days I only set foot on a track for a race. My training was always through the fields and woods, whereas Chataway was always practising sprints on the track and so developing greater speed.

Before leaving the Service I ran a solo 3 miles in 14 min 21·4 s. That sounds feeble nowadays, but it made me one of the top 3-milers in the country then. As, for the last time, I left quiet Watchet, which I had grown to love, I realized I had learned a lot there, but that the real struggle lay ahead.

Chapter 11

BANK CLERK ON TOUR

I RETURNED to my old home at Coulsdon to find that my school friends had left the district. There were no other distractions, so I continued to train regularly over Farthing Downs. At the beginning of July I was to race the AAA 6 miles. I was 20 and had not attempted anything serious beyond 3 miles on the track. Frank Aaron, the holder of the AAA title and English 6-mile record, was defending. Walter Hesketh, my conqueror in the National Junior Cross-country, was entered as well. He had beaten Aaron in the Northern 6-mile Championships in the previous month, setting up a new Northern record. Bill Gray, Midland champ, was also racing, so any sports writer would have been justified in assessing my chances as non-existent. But I had made up my mind that I would win the title. Goodness knows where my confidence sprang from.

The race was on the Friday night of the AAA meeting. I took an early lead, and only Bill Gray ran with me. He fought hard and after $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles rushed past, hoping to break me, but I sprinted past him on the next straight. We exchanged sprints for two or three laps, when I carried my charge on a full lap. Bill Gray was forced to give up the battle, and I ran into a 100-yds lead. A stranger at the trackside called out my lead in terms of seconds. As we passed 4 miles this man told me how Hesketh was gaining a second or two each lap, so I ran as hard as I could go, despite my exhaustion. That was my first 6 miles and it made me realize how agonizing a race it is. The gap between Hesketh and me opened up a little as Walter realized he had let me slip out of his grasp. I ran in an easy winner but a very tired athlete, in 29 min 32 s, a new English record. Walter was a good second, 100

yds away, with Bill Gray fighting gamely to take third place. Frank Aaron had not run a good race, fortunately for me, for, had he done so, it might have been a different story.

I did not know that Aaron had had an argument with the Northern Counties officials, who refused to nominate him to defend his title in addition to Walter Hesketh, who was their official representative. This precipitated the retirement of a great runner, for Frank Aaron gave up the sport in disgust. Next day I started in the 3 miles, but could not run well after the tiring 6 miles and finished fourth with my best time. This race was won by Bill Beckett, the Kentish runner, with Chataway in second place.

My performance that week-end brought the most exciting news in my athletic career—an invitation to represent Great Britain against France at the White City on August Bank Holiday. Through the post came a brand new international vest. I put it on, puffing out my thin chest in front of the mirror in my bedroom. This was such a thrill that for several days I went through the ceremony before training. I had to slip the vest off quickly to avoid being caught showing-off by other members of the family.

If I had known the consequences of winning the AAA 6 miles, I would have forsaken that distance and run the much easier 3 miles or the even easier mile, which was my speciality at that time. As it was, I became labelled as a 6-miler when in fact my greatest ability has always been on the half-distance and under. On August Bank Holiday Hesketh turned the tables on me in my first International track race. I heard that Walter had trained like mad after the AAA meeting. He had made up his mind to beat me and the record. This he did when he pounded away over the last mile and ran a great 29 min 13·8 s. I was second in nearly the same time as that in which I had won the British title.

I restarted my employment with Lloyds Bank that week. But I refused to go back to the City of London because I was convinced that travelling and the polluted atmosphere in the City were bad for health. I would rather have left Lloyds than join those unfortunate slaves of the City. Thus, I became a member of the Executor and Trustee department in Croydon, where my brother Peter was in the banking office.

After a week in the Bank the *News of the World* British games were held at the White City. Willi Slykhuis of Holland and Bill Beckett,

the AAA 3-mile champ, were in the field. Beckett had an unfortunate outward appearance of being extremely cocky. I knew that he was really a nice fellow, but his mannerisms decided the attitude that was adopted towards him in the dressing-room. The other runners agreed that whatever happened they must beat Beckett. So the pace was particularly hot for his benefit.

They took turns at leading. It was very trying and Beckett ran off the track at the half-way mark. That was a signal for me to take over, and only Alan Parker and Slykhuis stayed the pace. Parker tried once or twice to take the lead and race away but I sprinted past him each time. On the last lap it was Slykhuis against me. On the back straight it happened. The Dutchman sprinted away and won in 14 min 0·8 s. I achieved my best time of 14 min 3·0 s, but I was disgruntled because I had been left cold on the sprint.

This race resulted in my being nominated to represent Britain for the 5,000 m and 10,000 m in the coming tour of Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. Lloyds Bank, who are very generous to sportsmen, granted me leave of absence. Before going away I got permission to train on Whitgift Middle School's field, only a stone's throw from the Bank. At lunch-time I ran an hour, having already run before breakfast some mornings. Then I trained a third time on returning to Coulsdon at 6 p.m. Thus, I was extremely fit when the British team assembled at the air terminal. I got in with a group including Hesketh, George Broad, a 16-year old pole-vaulter, and Joe Binks, the veteran critic of the *News of the World*. Over our last English cups of tea Joe shook his head, saying how wrong it was for fellows of our age to be champions. Why, in his day, they only trained once a week and then did a mile or so walk and a couple of sprints. "You," said Joe, "you won't last out a year as champions. You'll be burnt out and finished by the Olympics in Helsinki. Just you wait and see."

On the plane I sat with John Savidge, the 6 ft 6 in, 16-stone Marine, Len Eyre and Brian Shenton. John was the merriest man in the team; his stories flowed incessantly. The trouble with John was that he would distribute his length across the other three of us and his feet were more often than not on my shoulders. But he was quite comfortable!

At Belgrade the plane circled round waiting for the sheep and goats to be driven off the airfield. On landing we saw the decrepit state of the place. Wrecked German planes still lay where they had been

smashed in the war, and besmocked soldiers with tommy-guns stared at us as we disembarked in the heat. It was obvious that Yugoslavia was extremely poor and had suffered badly from the war. The atmosphere was quite strange to us. A kind of quiet existed, and despite the friendly greetings there was in the background an uncertain deathliness. Since then I have come to associate this emptiness with the Communist world.

We stayed in a new hotel where the lift could manage about one man and his luggage. It took us a good half-hour to get up to our rooms. The plastering was half finished, with holes left for the lights, and many rooms were without running water. Arthur Wint travelled separately and arrived late in the evening without his bags. They had been lost en route. A Yugoslav cobbler measured Arthur's feet and promised to bring an outsize pair of shoes for him in time for the races. Arthur borrowed the rest of his kit and won both the 400 and 800 m in this makeshift ensemble.

The team were warned to behave quietly because the Yugoslavs had been stoning the British Embassy as a result of territorial troubles in Trieste. But at the stadium we had to fight off the crowds, such was their enthusiasm for our presence. Everyone wanted to have an autograph or to shake hands with the British. The races were held in the late afternoon but did not avoid the Balkan heat. Before I raced the 10,000 m I watched Bannister run a British-record 1,500 m, only to lose to Ottenheimer.

The crowd were at fever pitch. McDonald Bailey equalled the world record for 100 m, and, after that 1,500 m, the crowd were really roaring for Mihalic, our opponent, as we toiled around the first of our 25 laps. Mihalic and Hesketh dictated the pace and several times I was left 15 yds behind. Each time I shut my eyes and ran with all my strength. The others were killing me with a pace I could hardly maintain. At 20 laps we caught the second Yugoslav, and he spoke to Mihalic, probably telling Franjo to get in behind him, for they set off hard with Hesketh dropping to fourth as I moved up to Mihalic's shoulder. I became inflamed with the thought that this other Yugoslav had been waiting to help his team-mate. I surged past them despite my terrible fatigue. My senses swirled with the heat, and I ran harder and harder without a glance over my shoulder. The last lap was over quickly, and on breaking the tape I nearly collapsed as Bannister had done earlier. Though I had given all I had I had clocked 1 min

30 s slower than my best time, because I was not acclimatized. Walter Hesketh went to pieces and dropped over half a lap behind. He complained bitterly about the heat.

An enormous banquet was held in the evening. It went on for hours to the accompaniment of wonderful folk-dancing and singing. On our final day in Belgrade the team were entertained by the British Ambassador and his wife. They told us about the recent stoning of the Embassy and said that our visit had done more for Anglo-Yugoslav relations in three days than their efforts had in the last three years.

The British Board had requested members of the team to take packets of sewing needles for our opponents as gifts, since needles were supposed to be scarce in Yugoslavia. Mihalic thought I was mad when I tried to give him a packet of needles. John Savidge said the Yugoslavs thought it an old English custom to give needles away. I further complicated matters by asking for a halfpenny in return for the sharp objects—this being an English superstition, too.

Then on to Athens, where the heat put Belgrade in the shade. We trained in the night but the heat then was still oppressive. We were warned to refrain from sun-bathing, eating fruit or drinking tap-water. But it was too late, for, one after another, the team went down with stomach upsets. Bannister was the first to disappear from circulation, and he was very ill. John Disley, Geoff Elliott and I didn't go down until our second day. We sat around watching John Savidge go through an enormous meal washed down with glasses of cold beer. John was about the only athlete untouched by the trouble, and he lectured us between mouthfuls on how to avoid germs. Apparently we didn't eat enough steaks, and the greatest insult he guffawed was: "You should drink more beer."

After a restless night Len Eyre and I had breakfast in bed. We were too ill to leave our rooms. Jack Crump came round to tell us which event we were to do. The best news was that John Savidge was ill—that was worth getting up for. We gathered round his bed and told him he ought to drink more beer. Poor John was so weak that he couldn't laugh. A team was chosen from this group of invalids. Athletes were taking part in all sorts of events that they hadn't done since their last school sports. John Savidge had to throw the javelin. That was an amusing spectacle, for it never rose more than a few feet from the ground before it clanked along the cinders and, more often

than not, disappeared into the auditorium, which quickly cleared at one end.

The track was long and narrow, the exact replica of the ancient Greeks' Olympic Stadium. In the longer races one could wave at opponents as they passed in the opposite direction within a few yards. The British Embassy staff again gave us a welcome day's relaxation at their country villa by the sea. And of course we explored Athens and saw the antiquities. Then all we wanted was to go home, for we were still ill. But we had to fly on to Istanbul.

Choice of rooms was a difficult task on these tours because of some members' idiosyncrasies. Walter Hesketh sat up till 2 a.m. roaring at comic cartoons and noisly crunching sweets or peanuts. Walter's guffaws were even audible from adjacent rooms. Frank Evans, the half-miler in the team, slept early, but he had an awful habit of grinding his teeth, making a screech, screech all night.

The match in Istanbul was a bitty affair watched by a small crowd huddling in the shade offered by the stand on the home straight. It is a magnificent stadium that can hold about 30,000 to 40,000 people. But no one could sit on most of the terracing. It was so hot that it would have burnt the seat out of your pants. Roger Bannister climbed out of his sick bed and tried to race. Of course, he was last in the 800 m in about 2 min 8 s. Chataway and I ran in the 5,000 m and, after I had led nearly the whole distance, we were still accompanied by the Turkish captain, Onel. I could not do anything, but Chataway ran behind, not realizing how spent I was. Going down the back straight, I called, "Go, Chris, for goodness sake go!" He did and took Onel with him. This was good, for he killed the Turk, and I was able to raise a sprint on the last 100 yds and snatch second place a few yards behind Chris.

When I got home I was dosed unsuccessfully with an array of antibiotics. For three weeks I suffered, and it took the advice of an old Gallipoli soldier to cure me. He prescribed a dose of castor oil. I was 9½ stone by this time and found it hard to stand up, let alone run. Doctor's orders were that I should not begin running for three months. I thought that was nonsense, so I started training right away. At first I could only walk a short distance. When I started to run slowly I was so weak that my knees knocked together. But it was surprising how quickly the strength returned through exercise for, only three weeks later, I won a club 7½-mile race by over 2 min.

This was my first winter at home after the RAF, and I did not relish training on the roads in the dark because of the hard surface and the risk of being run over or poisoned by fumes. So I trained on Farthing Downs in the dark. The grass was tall and tufty along my chosen path. Elsewhere there were holes, anthills and the remains of wartime trenches. I navigated in the dark with the aid of the odd bush and patches of lime I put down to mark the route. Occasionally I fell over an obstacle. On one occasion there was a suspicious man on the Downs with a felt hat pulled down over his eyes. An hour later a police car appeared, and I assumed that the man must have been a crook of some sort. I heard later that the police were watching ME because they had a report that a strange man was running on the Downs. The mysterious character was a detective.

That winter of 1951–52 I won the Surrey, Southern England Senior and Inter-Counties titles, all by huge margins, even though I was a Junior. On the Continent in my first International Cross-country races, I was second at the Le Soir Race of Champions in November, 1951, to Lucien Theys of Belgium. I won the international race at Mezidon, Normandy, in January, 1952, and was second to Van de Wattyne of Belgium at Hannut in February, 1952.

In February I became 21 but I refused to break my training routine for a birthday party. Nor would I drink any of the champagne. Silly, wasn't I?

In February running on the Downs I tripped over an anthill. I was going at full speed so I went flat on my face. My foot was damaged, and I had to go easy for two or three days. When running for the Southern title I had to bandage the foot to relieve the pain. That was the race I won by more than 200 yds. I rested the foot up and it appeared to be all right again. But in the National Cross-country, on a very hilly course at Great Barr, Birmingham, the foot went again. Walter Hesketh won that race—another of his really tremendous performances—while I was carried off to the ambulance after finishing second. The foot was causing me agony, and I had to be carried to and from trains and taxis to get home.

I visited hospitals but my foot was still useless and very painful. At last I visited Mick Mays, the British team masseur at Mitcham. He put me right immediately with some manipulation and magic, and I began training again at the end of March.

Paris was the next trip and there I ran fifth in a 3,000-m race in

8 min 41·2 s. This poor time was largely due to my enthusiasm's running away with me, for I scorched off at the start and killed myself before half-way.

I then had a series of races, improving with each outing. They were:

May 7. 3,000 m at Leyton: third in 8 min 28·8 s
May 14. 1,500 m at Motspur: first 3 min 57·2 s
May 17. 3 miles at Motspur: first, 14 min 7·2 s
May 21. 1 mile at Tooting: first, 4 min 25 s
May 24. 2 miles at Brighton: first, 9 min 7·4 s
May 27. 1½ miles at Paddington: third, 6 min 43·8 s
May 31. 3 miles at White City: first, 13 min 44·8 s (British record)

This last race of 3 miles was my first really great British record and it overshadowed a fine performance by Frank Sando, who also broke Sidney Wooderson's old record when he came second in 13 min 48 s—5·6 s faster than Wooderson's time.

Chapter 12

HELSINKI OLYMPICS

In the British Championships of 1952 my plans were to defend my 6-mile title and regain the British record from my old rival, Walter Hesketh. Everything went fine and I won the AAA title after a terrific battle with Fred Norris, Bolton Harriers' famous running miner. The result was a new British record, superior to the 10,000-m Olympics record. The Queen visited the Championships on the Saturday, and I was fortunate to be among those presented to her. The Queen showed that she knew an awful lot about the sport and she spent many minutes chatting to each athlete.

The Olympic Games at Helsinki were now a certainty for me, and my efforts and thoughts were directed towards this supreme test. At last the day came for the team to assemble in London, and we were flown to Finland in uncomfortable Avro Yorks. The leg room was insufficient, and long-legged athletes soon became cramped. We tried exercising up and down the gangway but had to stop when the pilot complained that we were tipping the plane. The forepart of the cabin was so hot that we had to sit in shirt sleeves, even with the heater turned off. But the passengers at the rear were frozen without the heater, and some athletes suffered afterwards in Helsinki for several days. Jim Peters and Stan Cox were still ill when they had to race, and I believe the chills they caught on the plane were responsible for their failure.

We were all excited as we arrived over Helsinki and had our first glimpse of the Olympic Stadium. The Olympic Village was not a soulless section of new flats with still-earthy lawns, for the place was bright and alive. At the main gate the flags of the participating nations

were hoisted with fanfares of trumpets as each new team arrived. We were fascinated by the kaleidoscope of national costume among the competitors. Near the display of flags was the high arch of the main gate with friendly soldiers keeping the crowds of sightseers and autograph-hunters at bay. Below the flags was a shoeshine boy whom the laziest or the most tired members of the teams visited every morning. I was one of his regular customers and, from that vantage point, I watched the athletes at a row of kiosks where we could buy sports goods, postcards and souvenirs of Finland.

The dining hall for competitors was a huge tent separated into three sections to cater for national tastes in food. One was for South American and Oriental athletes; the second catered for African and Arab palates; and the largest section served European and American-style food. The menu was so enticing that despite the capacity for food my hard training had given me I worked too hard with a knife and fork.

The air in Finland had a cool, crisp quality which refreshed the body so well that training was not exhausting. Across the main road outside the camp there was a splendid cinder track. All day crowds of athletes in multi-coloured tracksuits moved round the area, working for the treasured gold medals. The changing accommodation included the famous Finnish steam Sauna bath as well as the usual baths and showers.

The Eastern European competitors, who lived in the Otaniemie camp on the other side of town, came to our ground for field events to train with the Americans, Norwegians, Italians and other top strong men. It was interesting to see the coaches 'spying' on the stars, taking movie films and snapshots of them in action. The Russians in particular were great believers in the 'spy' method, and their results since Helsinki have shown how their studies of the athletes of other nations have paid off.

I trained with Fred Wilt and other US distance runners, mostly in the surrounding woods. Finland is so dedicated to athletics that it was a common sight to see track-suited Finns running to work through the woods. In little clearings there were sprinting tracks and throwing circles, with enough children busy in private competition to justify the existence of more facilities.

I shared a room with three 'easy event' athletes and Frank Sando. Frank and I were early to bed most nights, but we lost a lot of sleep because the other athletes stayed out late. In the evenings there were

film shows in a school hall at the camp, or we could go sight-seeing in the city. All competitors had identity cards which gave us the privilege of free bus and tram travel in Helsinki. Buses were waiting at the camp to take athletes to all the Olympic venues so that we could watch other competitors training for various events. It was exciting thumbing through the list of sports which I should have loved to watch. But I was only day-dreaming, because my training took the whole of my time. I watched only two days of the athletics, and even then I felt so guilty that I spent even more time training, for my resolve was not to waste a single hour in my efforts to become better than Emil Zatopek.

The opening ceremony was one I can never forget. Despite heavy rain its magnificence made my heart beat faster. The splendid veteran, Nurmi, greatest middle-distance runner of the 1920, 1924 and 1928 Olympics, brought the torch into the arena. Nurmi, then over 60, is almost a deity to the Finns. In Finland there are two great bronze statues, one at Helsinki and the other at Turku showing him running. He is the only athlete I have ever heard of to be commemorated by two public statues in his lifetime. As he ran round the arena with the Olympic torch the audience went wild with delight to see their hero setting such a wonderful example to youth of bodily fitness and splendour late in life.

But there was a much older Finnish athlete waiting to take the flame from Nurmi. He was a dignified man of over 80, Hannes Kolemannen, a legendary figure to the Finns. Kolemannen won the Olympics marathon in 1904, 48 years before that great day. It was to him that Nurmi handed the torch. Kolemannen went with it up a lift in the tower, where he kindled a flame which lit the sky over the stadium until it was extinguished a fortnight later when the Games ended.

For me, the highlights at Helsinki were Fanny Blankers-Koen's courageous effort to run despite her illness; Bob Mathias's win in the Decathlon; the Jamaicans' great victories in the 4 × 400 m relay; the 400 m flat and the 100 m; and, last but not least, Emil Zatopek. I was very lucky to train with him on several occasions. Emil is an amazingly friendly and generous man. There is no trace of the venom with which so many approach athletics. While training he noticed I had bare ankles. He removed one pair of his socks before I could stop him. He insisted that I put them on to protect my legs from the cold.

He also gave me his red Czech vest which I treasured until I had it stolen the following year in Dublin.

Zatopek genuinely wanted everyone to be as good as himself, because he enjoyed a struggle right to the last agonizing yard of the race. While we were warming up before the 10,000 m I wished Emil the best of luck. Surprisingly he retorted, "I wish Anufriev to win." Alexander Anufriev, the Russian, had already beaten Zatopek in Moscow earlier in the summer. I was unable to satisfy Zatopek's desire for company, for I could only keep up with Emil for 6½ of the 10 km before I was exhausted. I led briefly, but Emil was unwilling to allow my pace to prevail and he pounded ahead to win his first gold medal. Frank Sando ran a brilliant 'behind race' for fifth position without one shoe, while I staggered on in an oblivion of fatigue to finish seventh.

The 5,000 m demanded a heat. I was in the first together with Alain Mimoun, Gaston Reiff, Andersson the Swede, John Landy and the courageous Finn, Taipale, who had broken his back during the winter in a ski-ing accident. Qualifying was not difficult, and I was able to ease into fifth place, the last qualifier because Reiff, Mimoun, Andersson and Taipale indulged in a ridiculous final sprint. Chataway and Parker both qualified with similar ease, Chataway having the slowest time of the fifteen finalists. For the whole summer in 1952 he had not avoided hard races in England, and in my opinion his consistent slow racing contributed to his downfall at Helsinki. Even at the last moment he seemed to think a slow-run heat was best, whereas I think a strong average speed in a heat is always advantageous, for it allows an easy finish, avoiding that exhausting sprint.

The final was a real nerve-tester. As the 5,000-m men warmed up on the sports field outside the stadium, no one spoke except for a brief "Hello." The tension was terrific at the start. The crowd chanted "Gaston, Gaston." Gaston Rieff, the reigning Olympics champion, turned, smiling, and said, "That is for me, Gordon."

A Hungarian starting next to me had bandages on his ankles and I thought, "Here's one man I ought to beat." There was one false start and then we were off. Chataway, who was drawn next to me on the outside, sprinted away into the lead with Schade, the German, while I ran on Zatopek's heels at the tail end. For the first four laps Emil ran exactly the same speed, and we worked our way through the field as Chataway and Schade tired themselves. Emil took the

lead towards the middle of the race and tortured the runners with changes of speed and gradual acceleration. I was sixth most of the time behind Zatopek, Schade, Mimoun, Reiff and Chataway. I had made up my mind before the race to try and break from the others when there were three laps to go. This I tried despite my exhaustion, and I learned an important lesson by so doing. The lesson is never decide tactics before a race, because no two races follow the same pattern. The athlete must use his intelligence and do the correct things as the race pattern evolves.

Thus, in that Olympics race, my effort only lasted for three-quarters of a lap to the 4,000 mark, where Gaston Reiff, who was on my shoulder, gave up. The others passed me and I was dropped 20 yds on the penultimate lap. I was utterly spent. I can remember seeing nothing but the concrete edge of the track as I drove myself on, trying not to lose more ground. The next I knew I was on the finishing straight with Chataway nearly walking in front of me. My last effort carried me into fourth place ahead of Chataway. We were both out on our feet. I staggered on to the grass and my senses slowly recovered.

I walked rubber-legged back to the other side of the track, where I met Chataway and saw an awful graze on his leg. Chris told me he had fallen over in his exhaustion. Afterwards, I left the stadium and jogged slowly in the woods to soothe my tired muscles, and then returned to the village for a well-earned rest. Imagine my surprise when some of the English newspapers arrived later and I read that some sports writers called me a bad sportsman for passing Chataway! I was so furious that I flung my kit in a corner of the room and decided to give up running. How could men who could not run 100 yds have the effrontery to write such damaging nonsense? After a long talk with team coach Geoff Dyson and with Chataway himself I cooled off and was dissuaded from retiring, but I shall never forget that insult from ignorant journalists.

After the strenuous races Dr Ewan Douglas and I were 'volunteers' for a dinner party at the British Ambassador's residence. Rather reluctantly we dressed in our blazers and flannels and climbed in the back of a Mercedes. We were jerked out of our sullen mood by the way we left the Olympic Village, travelling to town at a fearful speed, cutting in and out of the other traffic. At a roundabout which we negotiated '*à la* Moss' with tyres squealing we nearly claimed a victim. The last we saw of this pedestrian was his prostrate figure with fist

raised. We pulled up abruptly outside a fine building. The chauffeur said something in Finnish and shot off, leaving us in silence.

We came to our senses after a second or two. "I suppose this must be the place," said Ewan, pointing with his pipe towards the nearest building behind the trees. We walked up the deserted drive and, as there was no sign of anyone, entered the hall. A flight of stairs led up, so we ascended. Each landing had several doors with names on silver plaques. When we reached the top we looked at each other and burst out laughing. Obviously we had been misled. We tried several houses around and eventually, by a process of elimination, found our hosts quite a bit farther up the street.

Others from the British team there were Jean Desforges (now Mrs Pickering), Thelma Hopkins, June Foulds (now Mrs Paul) and Dorothy Tyler. The meal was marvellous, with interesting conversation from beginning to end. What had started out for Ewan and myself as a duty engagement turned out to be one of the pleasantest evenings I have ever enjoyed. The return trip by tram was more leisurely, and we walked into the camp at a late hour.

As the team was leaving Helsinki there was a delay at the airport for half an hour. By coincidence a German trainer, Waldemar Gerschler, was waiting for his plane. I had never heard of him then but I gravitated towards a group in which Bannister, Chataway, and Brasher were shooting questions at Gerschler. From his answers I was certain that here was a man with a tremendous store of training knowledge. Gerschler explained at great length how he had trained Josy Barthel, Olympics victor in the 1,500 m, in which race Bannister had run so well. Bannister, Chataway and Brasher were astounded to hear of the training Barthel had undergone and they took careful note of everything Gerschler said. They even asked if he would train them, but Gerschler explained that he could only do so if they visited him at Freiburg in Southern Germany. He told them that he must first assess their ability by exhaustive scientific tests and only then could he give each of them the particular schedule which would suit them. Gerschler gave them his address, and later on I believe they exchanged a few letters. When they left Gerschler alone I had a quiet talk with him, and from that day he was my adviser and coach. I had to wait a year before I had saved enough money to visit Freiburg, but his monthly letters over that year enabled me to improve by the important 10 per cent and set my first world record for Britain in 1953.

Chapter 13

THE MILE AGAIN

After the Olympic Games at Helsinki the next big date was the Great Britain *v.* France match in Paris, which was rather an anti-climax. We were in a light-hearted mood. At the French airport John Savidge lured me on to the escalator which hoisted luggage on top of the buses. It shot me into the air. There was no bus at the top and I was in danger of falling about 15 feet when Jack Crump came out. He was aghast. "John," he said, "For goodness sake. Gordon's got to race tomorrow. Let him down at once."

John complied, but before I was low enough to jump off he sent me to the top again. It was hilarious for John but hair-raising for Jack and me. After three skyward trips I was able to jump clear.

At the Stadium we met Victor Sillon. He had been the French pole-vault champion but, as he spoke to us, he supported himself on crutches. He had suffered a bad accident and the doctors told him his sporting career was finished. But he told me confidentially then that he would be champion again despite the doctors' verdict. Several years later he set a new French record, which he improves with every season. There was an example of the highest determination and courage in the face of adversity.

We enjoyed our meals in the Hotel Grande Bretagne, where eight of us shared one large round table. We ordered red wine with the meals since it is a marvellous tonic for tired athletes. This wine was served in carafes which were supposed to remain on the table until the bill was made out. We kept only two or three empties on view and we thought it would be a good joke to hide the rest under the table and watch the waiters' faces. So many were hidden that there was

At the Rickmansworth Sunshine Home for Blind Babies . . . and 18 miles later at the Old Tyme Players' Theatre, Charing Cross.

3 MILES
1-TABORI 13:44.6
2-CHATAWAY 13:44.6
3-BERES
4-IBBOTSON

Chataway dominated. He trails Tabori, Beres, and Ibbotson in the Hungary *v.* Great Britain match.

Chataway dominates. He wins the 5,000 metres in world record time and leaves Kuts at the tape.

a jingle of glass every time we moved our feet. How those fellows drank all that wine I don't know, for one small glass was enough for me. At the end of the meal a waiter counted the carafes. "*Un, deux, trois. C'est impossible!*" After an argument the eight of us walked slowly to the door, then sprinted into the street, followed by cries of wrath as the waiters saw the cache of empties spilling from under the table.

When I got back to England I thought hard and long about the reasons for my disappointing show at Helsinki. Sports writers were criticizing me, and the general opinion was that I was overtrained. Yet I knew that the successful athletes at the Games had trained continuously for up to three hours a day. I decided to ignore the critics and increase my training. Two or three times a week I ran round every field within miles of my home in a pair of hobnailed boots until I had been going 2½ to 3 hours. Some days I was so tired that I could only walk the last mile home on Farthing Down. My feet became blistered where the boots had gouged them, so that to start running every day was agony until the wounds became numb. The results of this training showed quickly, when, a month later, I ran in the Surrey County Road Relay Championships. The lap of the race is just short of 3 miles with a steep hill about two-thirds of the way round. Chataway held the record just outside 14 min. This did not last long, however, for Peter Driver clocked under 14 min on the first leg.

I was impatiently waiting to run on the fifth lap, and it seemed ages before my turn came. I set off after the other teams' runners who were leading South London Harriers. I ran like a madman, making noises and grimacing just as I had seen Zatopek run. I went so hard that I can only vaguely remember passing others and racing on to hand on the baton to my brother Peter for him to do the last leg. I was agreeably surprised when my time was announced—13 min 26 s. This gave me confidence in the hard grind I was submitting myself to, and I worked harder as the winter closed in. Every day I ran with boots, covering about 20 miles each outing.

Meanwhile, in December, Chataway won the Inter-Varsity Cross-country Championships and was to run at the beginning of January in the Surrey Championships at Richmond Park. South London Harriers sent a strong team, and I persuaded Peter Driver and Mick Firth, who were still juniors, to race with us in the senior 7½-mile event. It is worth mentioning that this race proved to be the turning

point for the Club, for we won the championship handsomely for our first victory in Senior Cross-country since the thirties. From then on the Club went from strength to strength to become National Champions. This was due to the way the boys had trained, whether they came in first or last, and was not due to the fact that I was able to fill the first position in most team races. Back to the Surrey Cross-country—I won the event by over ¼ mile from Terry Keegan of Walton AC, showing how I had improved even more since the Road Relay three months before. Chataway was third.

With my mind concentrating on the gruelling training I found time had flown, and it was soon the track season again. This was the season in which three world records and 33 assorted records came my way. The majority of these records meant very little. I have run superior races since then without being able to claim records of any sort, but that goes to show how silly it is to gauge performances by a stopwatch alone. The most important thing in a race is to win against other athletes.

In April, the Southern 6 miles at the LAC Schools Meeting at the White City turned out to be *me* versus Essex Beagles. A group of the Essex boys—comprising Terry Learmouth, George Knight, Ted Baverstock and others—came along to support Jim Peters. I met them while warming up. They were old friendly enemies from the cross-country season. "Jim Peters is going to beat you today," they taunted. I was stung, and it made me determined. So I boasted, "I'll lap him."

In the race every time we passed by the section of the stand where these fellows were, they shouted, "Come on, Jim," or, "Up the Beagles." It made me hopping mad, and Jim was close behind all the way so I did not have a chance of lapping him. At the finish he was only a little over 100 yds behind, despite the fact that I had run a British record. That was excellent running for a veteran—a marathon runner too. It was also an example of the splendid club spirit which Jim Peters created among the Essex Beagles. One of the athletes who cheered Jim on that day—George Knight—became the world's fastest 6-miler four years later.

Incidentally, my new British 6-mile record did not seem to impress the critics though it was such a hard fight for me. Norris McWhirter chose this time to announce, "Pirie's running has become listless and lacking in inspiration."

The performance which gave me greatest joy in 1953 was my

victory in the Emsley Carr Mile at the British Games. I was out to prove a theory, and I think I did so. Gradually I was becoming convinced that the old dictum of 'one man one distance' was false. I was sure that a properly trained runner had a wide range of distances in which he could excel. So, against all tradition and in face of a lot of opposition, I made up my mind to try the mile. Remember that three weeks before I had set up a world 6-mile record, and on August Bank Holiday I had made a new 3-mile British record. The idea of such a runner going for the mile was unheard-of and absurd to the governors of athletics. So, at the British Games I was invited to run in the 3-mile event. I telephoned Jack Crump and requested him to include me in the field for the inaugural Emsley Carr Mile. This request he scornfully rejected. Who had heard of a 6-mile world-record holder racing against the world's best milers? Olympic champion Barthel was due to compete; so were America's Wes Santee, AAA Mile Champion Bill Nankeville, and last, but not least, Chris Chataway. In any case, Jack told me, there were no more places available. "All right, "I told him. "I will start in the 3 miles but only race 2 miles in an attempt on the 2-mile record." Jack pointed out that this would spoil the 3-mile race, so it was out of the question. "Then I will not run in the meeting at all," I told Crump. That ended the argument for the time being but, nearer the day, I received word that I was to be invited to 'make up the numbers' in the mile because Josy Barthel wasn't able to race.

Immediately before the start a large bound book was brought to the competitors. That was the Trophy itself and the runners were asked to sign on a left-hand page. This was a silly moment to ask a keyed-up competitor such a thing and, in my nervous state, I nearly signed on the opposite page. An official told me that page was reserved for the winner, not me, to sign on. It seems incredible that this incident could give rise to a newspaper story telling the world that I was so sure of myself that I was going to sign as the winner before the race had even started! How can writers, who understand so little of an athlete's mind, dare to make up such stories?

I won the race. Santee was second. Down went my signature on the right-hand page. There was no comment from the officials. I ran a victory lap grinning like a Cheshire cat, so pleased was I with the result. But it didn't seem to please everybody, for Gundar Haegg was quoted as saying, "Pirie will be burnt out in two years."

The most enjoyable part of the season was in August, when South London Harriers visited Norway on an athletic tour. We travelled via Newcastle and the ferry to Bergen. The other passengers did not appreciate our training around the ship's deck during the night. We were greeted on the quay at Bergen by our hosts of Nørrøna Club. My hosts, Mr and Mrs Tefre, lived half-way up the mountain overlooking the town. We had lunch and trained at the Skansemyren track a little further up the steep slopes. It was wonderful to sit in the Tefres' lounge after dinner and look at the sparkling lights of the town and the darkness of the harbour below.

Bergen's population is said to be born with webbed feet, such is the amount of rain that falls there. On the average, Bergen has rain 300 days of the year, but we enjoyed three of the dry days before the rain came down on the Tuesday, when we had our inter-club match. Nørrøna won in the mist and rain, and afterwards entertained us to supper. I was very late to bed—4 a.m. in fact—but went training up the mountain at 6.30 a.m. before a three-hour train journey to Voss. That makes me smile, for nowadays I prefer my bed. The train followed the foot of the mountains, and the track in places ran through little tunnels where the rock face drops steeply into the smooth, still fjord. The water reflected the mountains as clearly as a mirror. When we stopped at small halts the silence was overwhelming, and at one place we listened to singing coming from far across the water.

The train left the Sørfjord through a tunnel emerging in the valley of Vossevangen. A reception committee was waiting to meet us. As at Bergen we stayed with private families. Pedre Lahlun, the Voss club secretary, was looking after me and our club high-jump champion, John Patten. Pedre spoke English very well, but I noticed that his accent was different from that of other Norwegians we had met at Bergen. He explained that Voss was isolated until recent times, so they had developed an accent and a vocabulary of their own. We were astounded when Pedre came out with some naughty English words. When we asked who taught them to him he said, "Oh, we had some English Boy Scouts here last year!"

In the huge valley where Voss nestles, there are lakes several miles long. High above the town there is the second largest ski jump in Norway, called the Bavallen, where skiers can jump more than 100 m, well over 300 ft! Pedre told me about his week-end ski trips in the

mountains. He never saw a sign of civilization the whole time he was up there. One peak has snow on it even at the height of the summer. It looked to me only a few miles away, but when I tried to run up to the snow line I had to return before darkness fell, leaving the snow glowing red in the sunset. The clear air made distances deceptive and I discovered it was more than 1 Norwegian mile (approximately 7 English miles) to the snow.

We trained on the track at Voss, which is in a pine wood bounded on one side by the river and on the other by the town. The dressing-rooms contained a Sauna bath. After training we sat in the very hot steam, dripping with perspiration and wetting our lips from a bucket of cold water; then we rushed out and plunged under an ice-cold shower, which snapped our lulled senses to the alert. When we ran our competitions in the evening it was still and cool. Such conditions are typical in Scandinavia, and they account for the high performances achieved by athletes there. South London Harriers won the match handsomely. The Voss boys were fine fellows and we enjoyed racing them, win or lose. I am sure that if the test had been with skis in the mountains, the results would have been reversed. Pedre told me that ski-ing was the only sport they could enjoy for the greater part of the year. The running track was flooded in the winter and used as a skating rink.

Pedre and I went fishing on one of the lakes. The water was like a mirror, reflecting the woods and mountains. Our rowing-boat cut the surface into sparkling ripples which spread out and out to the farthest shores. As in the fjord, sound carried a long way. Waiting for the fish to bite, we heard a conversation from a cottage about a mile away. The solitude and the scenery were a tonic but we walked back home empty-handed. In silence, broken only by the scrunch of our boots on the gravel path, we drank in the view and the cool, clean air, and were glad to be alive.

One of Pedre's hobbies was brewing beer, and our hosts persuaded me and John Patten to have a glass with supper. The heavy liquid resembled petrol, for it swirled around threateningly and was thicker at the bottom than at the top. One mouthful knocked me silly!

After our unsuccessful fishing trip Mr Lahlun senior asked casually, "Do you like trout for breakfast, Gordon?" Of course I said that I did, but I forgot all about it until the next morning. Going downstairs for breakfast I met Mr Lahlun coming in with a catch of a dozen or so

fine trout. They tasted marvellous, but I never understood why he could catch fish and I couldn't. Since then I have discovered the reason—I am a hopeless fisherman.

We had all made great friendships with the Voss people and had heavy hearts when we had to leave. We waved goodbye from the railcar as we left on the way to Granvin, a little village on the shores of the Hardangfjord. The train wound downhill through gullies, racing streams that tumbled from the mountains. This leg of the journey we spent listening avidly on the radio to the test match against the Aussies. Thanks to the fine captainship of Sir Len Hutton, Denis Compton was able to make the winning hit.

Our first target at Granvin was the café, where we did justice to Norwegian sweet cakes and coffee. The ferry arrived all too soon. It belonged to the Hardanger Sunhordlanske Dampskipsellskap or, in English, the Hardanger Sunland Steamship Company. The Hardanger is the best known of the Norwegian fjords. The Norwegians call it the 'wondrously beautiful fjord'. It has rocky sides and fine waterfalls. Far above is the Følgefønne Glacier among wild mountains. There is a strip of fertile land fringing the water, on which are smiling hamlets. This land is famous for its produce. Hundreds of orchards enjoy the sunshine, and Hardanger fruit is renowned.

Our trip on the ferry was to Kinsarvik, farther up the Fjord, and we passed several other little places. At every stop the more energetic ones in the party jumped off before the boat was tied up, and we raced each other to the little quayside shops to buy souvenirs. There were wood carvings of grotesque men or beautiful reindeer and silk-embroidered badges bearing the place names. At one spot the boat only came alongside for a moment to collect the mailbag, and some of us had to jump back to the ship over the widening gap of water to avoid being stranded.

One smart-alick discovered a shower hidden in the washroom ceiling. We tried unsuccessfully to lure our club secretary, Mr Thomas, to enter. He was suspicious and rightly so, for we had control of the water-tap outside. In the horseplay several of us got wet, but it didn't dampen our spirits. On reaching Odda at the head of the fjord at about 4 p.m., my first wish was to go running. A Norwegian meal was waiting at the Hardanger Hotel but I preferred to train. If I had taken the huge meal we were offered I should not have been able to walk any more that day—let alone run.

I changed at the sports ground and ran up the valley, away from the fjord. The road skirted the deep green water of the lake. Soon I came to a small side-valley with a roaring river of greenish-white water running into the lake. This came from the melting ice of the Følgefønne Glacier, which looked only a short distance away. But the clear, cold air was deceiving me again. The steep mountain slopes were covered with pines and it was there that I first saw Løpstring. These are cables strung as tight as violin strings up the mountain side and used as a slide for the timber which is cut high above. When a load of logs was sent down, the only warning was a tremendous ripping, crashing roar as they came plummeting down at an angle of 60 to 70 degrees. There were many Løpstring beside the track I was following. As I passed each one I speeded up a little in case a lethal load was on its way down.

The glacier sparkled through the pine trees ahead as I ran puffing up the hill against the course of the river tumbling over the rocks by the track. The air became cold and cutting. After I had been running for an hour the glacier was still a long way away, so I turned reluctantly and ran swiftly down the incline to the lake and a welcome meal in Odda.

Although it is miles from the outside world, Odda is the home of a great factory where calcium carbide and cyanimide are manufactured. The plant is there because electricity is very cheap with the abundance of hydro-electric stations in the mountains. The ores used are heated to tremendous temperatures in electric furnaces. The rumble of these furnaces can be heard up and down the fjord. The power pylons walk like great spiders from the mountains to the gaunt factory, and the pall of smoke from the tall chimneys fogs the air as it drifts slowly away. From the road outside the factory we warmed our hands on the beam of heat radiating from the furnace peepholes. The intensity of the fires left black spots before our eyes. What was once a quiet village was then quite spoilt, not only by the factory, but by Teddy Boys, who seemed as out of place as Eskimos in Trafalgar Square.

In Odda Gerry Goodrich and I were lucky to enjoy the hospitality of a Norwegian family. At mealtimes there was a family of eight as well as ourselves. Every inch of the huge table was covered with food. There were platefuls of pickled and dried fish, goat's cheese, cream cheese, tomatoes, raspberries, red currants, apples, brown and white bread, Kneckebrød, jams, honey, fruit juices, milk, pots of tea and

coffee. In addition to the table fare there were always cooked dishes of meat and fish with potatoes and other vegetables. A Norwegian meal is a friendly affair accompanied by the lovely, lilting Norwegian talk. Living with families is the only way to meet the people of any land. The only trouble is that in Odda, as in other places I have visited, I felt as if I left a little of myself behind. When I look back, I feel a sadness in my heart and the longing to return.

After the athletic meeting we had to wrench ourselves away to climb aboard the bus for a nine-hour journey to our next stop—Notodden. The driver was the Notodden shot-putt champion, Thorge Thorsen, and he had driven all the way by himself to collect us. He was over six feet tall and all of 16 stone, and he handled the bus as if it were a bumper car. We set off up the valley by the lakeside where I had run. The road zig-zagged along, bordered by large rocks embedded on the side facing the water. These were supposed to stop vehicles from falling the 20 ft down to the deep green water of the lake. On the opposite side of the road the rock face climbed vertically to the sky. Every now and then the road ducked under buttresses of rock through cold little tunnels where water dripped on the coach roof and the engine roared back at us.

Thorsen drove at a hair-raising speed and kept a look-out far ahead. He told me as he swung the vehicle round the corners that he had to spot other traffic in good time to avoid a collision, for in a crash one vehicle would surely plunge down into the lake. At the end of the lake we climbed 1,600 ft above sea level to pick up the remainder of the team, who stayed at the Utsikten Hotel.

On the next part of the journey we saw huge waterfalls and mountains as we climbed up to Dyrskard. Here there is a monument to the postman who was marooned for over a week in a snowstorm after trying to deliver his letters. When his rescuers found him he was still alive and kicking, having dug himself out of the snow with his post-horn. We passed Morgedal—the home of modern ski-ing. From here the word 'slalom' originates, together with many techniques such as the 'Telemark Swing'. The torch for the 1952 Olympic Winter Games was lit here.

At one place we had to refill the bus radiator from a stream, and this gave us a chance to stretch our stiff muscles. When we got going again we sang until we had run out of songs or become hoarse. Then the coach was quiet except for the roar of the engine, for most of the

party slept. The mountain air gave us wonderful appetites, and all our thoughts were on food. When the great moment arrived at Grungedal our sagging bodies recovered miraculously and there was a stampede for the restaurant. Platefuls and platefuls of sandwiches were dispatched. Finally, the willing caterers shrugged their shoulders and admitted defeat.

Most of us slept again on the final leg of the journey. For us athletes the time seemed to be spent in sleeping, eating and training. At Notodden it was no exception, and next day we went training in the pine woods between sleeps. In the evening Thorolf Rafto and I made a recording for the Notodden radio station. One question that was sprung on me was whether I could race as well in front of the handful of spectators who would be at the meeting in the evening as I could in front of the thousands at London's White City. My answer was that I did not mind if no-one watched so long as plenty of us raced. The challenge and exhilaration of the race were what mattered. I was still so tired that I did not want to race at Notodden, but I was obliged to do so to satisfy the organizers. They had put up a special prize for 1,500 m which they thought I should win. Instead Mick Firth won this cup on his 21st birthday, while I broke Olympics champion Mal Whitfield's track record for 800 m. In the evening we had a party to celebrate Mick's coming of age.

We drove to Oslo next day where I was inveigled into racing Franz Hermann of Belgium, then the world's fastest at 3,000 m. I ought not to have done it because I had promised the organizers the week before that I would save my energies for the Great Britain *v.* Germany match in five days' time. Brother Peter built up a huge lead in the race as Hermann, myself and the others dawdled behind. Then, like a fool, I started to race after my brother with three laps remaining. I ought to have left him to win the race, but Hermann was dogging my footsteps. He beat me on the last 100 yds sprint in the slowest time I have ever run.

Wes Santee, whom I had beaten in the mile in London, was watching in cowboy boots. Mal Whitfield was also at the meeting, and it was here that he convinced me of his theory that it was harmful to drink anything on the day of a race. I adopted this rule from that day in August, 1953, and stuck to it for years until my fateful collapse after the 1955 AAA championships.

I was up at 6 a.m. the following morning to fly to Berlin for the

international meeting. As I passed the customs at Templehof Airport with my rucksack on my back the officer asked me why I was visiting Berlin. When I told him, he handed back my passport and said, "Ah, yes, there is going to be a terrific race between Schade and the Britisher Pirie, but with the German crowd behind him, Schade will surely win." I thanked him for this information. After being in Berlin a day I had a phone message from the British Consulate. A Mr Ellis wished to see me, so we fixed a rendezvous. I could not imagine who Mr Ellis was and why he wanted to meet me. Imagine my surprise to find that he was my old school-friend, Glen Ellis. He was one of the boys who were hauled up before the Juvenile Court when we tried to get away with that German flare during the war. Ellis invited me to stay at his house near Lake Wansee, and I accepted willingly. This enabled me to run in the woods around the lakes and to sleep away from the noise of the city.

As the meeting drew nearer, circumstances increased my determination to win. As I ran in the woods, I thought of the German's words at the Airport, "Schade will win." More fuel was added to the fire when a Canadian control officer told me the crowd would be terrifically enthusiastic and so the German athletes would be sure to excel. When the British team arrived together with a covey of newsmen, I was already keyed up for the fight. Fred Green, who was to partner me over the 5,000 m, stepped jauntily up and announced that he had just beaten Frank Sando in an 8 min 57·0 s 2 miles on a very bad track and that he was a dead cert to beat me this time. This attitude is the only one that a champion should have, and Fred Green's determination was matched by his performance a year later, when he won the British 3-mile title in a world record.

With several other British athletes I did a recording for the German radio before the first day's events. The constant talk about the meeting increased my nervous tension as the race drew nearer. I shut myself in my room and read, trying to relax. Then the team selectors asked me to race both the 5,000 and 10,000 m. I objected and, after an argument, I was left with the shorter distance only.

The Olympic Stadium at Berlin is a fantastic place. Its vastness swallows up the largest crowds, and the 40,000 at the meeting seemed a mere handful. Hitler addressed his million on the field where I was warming up. I worked myself into a frenzy on its empty expanse. I had an hour in complete seclusion to concentrate on the race. My

plan was to go easily at the start and gradually increase the pace from lap to lap. Len Eyre was to call my lap times as I had decided to attempt to beat Gundar Haegg's world record. The tension inside me was like a great spring.

At last we were off! Fred Green led for 300 yds or so with Schade and me close behind. The speed was too slow, so I took the lead, increasing the tempo a little. The great crowd started chanting, "Schade, Schade, Schade," in time with my rhythm, and it helped spur me on. After a few laps the others faltered and I ran on at a great speed. The next six laps were slightly too fast for, with ½ mile to go, I was ahead of the world-record schedule. I daren't look behind. I imagined the others to be close. The exploding flash bulbs of the photographers left black spots in front of my eyes. Every step became an agony as the exhaustion clamped down on my straining muscles. The effort in the middle laps had been too costly and my speed dropped. The seconds ticked by as I struggled round the last lap to lunge at the tape. I had missed the record by some 30 yds or so. I staggered about with my eyes shut, such was my exhaustion. But I had the satisfaction of setting British records of 13 min 34 s for 3 miles and 14 min 2·6 s for 5,000 m. This was the second fastest 3-mile time in the world behind Gundar Haegg, and the fourth fastest 5,000 m behind Haegg, the Russian A. Anufriev and another, then unknown, Russian, V. Kuts. Fred Green finished 25 s behind me, hotly pursued by Schade.

Following the victory ceremony I left the Stadium and jogged round the field outside again. This was the best way to relax tired muscles and mind. Only then did I realize how exhausting the race had been. Because of my fatigue I lay down in the dressing-room and consequently was last to board the bus back to the hotel. Such lone wolf behaviour did not make me popular. Team Captain Harry Whittle told the others that it was not necessary for everybody to take their athletics so fanatically as Pirie did. I felt that the whole atmosphere in the British camp was too relaxed and lacking in concentration. Hardly surprising that we lost the match.

After the first day of the Berlin match I was invited to speak to some of the sports writers at dinner. The table they sat at was scarcely visible for wine bottles and glasses. I answered a number of rather incoherent questions before retiring for the night but I shuddered to think what they would make of my answers when they went into print.

My legs had stiffened up pretty badly next day and I was only able to jog round the fields at the stadium an hour before the second day's athletics. In the 10,000 m Frank Sando was well in front but the struggle for second place was a great one and took the crowd's attention. Coming into the last lap the German Eberlein sprinted strongly and with a triumphant look, proceeded to draw away from Walter Hesketh, who was sagging. It only seemed a matter of time before Walter would be shuffling round but in the middle of the back straight when his deficit was 20 yds, he drew himself up and like a shot from a gun was after the German. It happened so quickly that Walter was soon past the unsuspecting man, who gaped in surprise. Round the last bend Walter slowed a little and, with 100 yds to go, Eberlein took new heart. We shouted our heads off in competition with the huge crowd, and Walter careered agonizingly sideways up the track and crossed the line 2 or 3 in. before the luckless German. When interviewed afterwards Hesketh said, "With a yard to go I knew it was in the bag."

The steeplechase was terrible for Britain, with John Disley and Brasher a good half-lap or more behind the German pair. A further disappointment was the absence of Chataway and Bannister. Bill Nankeville fought Werner Lueg gamely in the 1,500 m but had to give best to Werner in the final sprint.

After the meeting there was another round of those ridiculous social engagements which seem specially designed to exhaust already fatigued athletes. A dinner was arranged miles from our hotel. It began late in the evening and finished about 2 a.m. We were informed that we would have to be up next morning in time to take a coach tour of the Russian Sector of Berlin, leaving the hotel at 7.30 a.m. Then there was to be a cocktail party at 10 a.m. and we were to leave by air for Stockholm at 11.30. We were told that no one could be excused because our hosts would be upset. I was so utterly tired that I locked myself in my bedroom and slept until 9 a.m. Even this extra sleep was not enough to refresh me. I reached the cocktail party in time, and then we rushed to the Templehof Airport and thence to Stockholm for the GB *v.* Sweden match. On the plane the team management tried again to talk me into competing in both 5,000 m and 10,000 m. We argued for some time but I was adamant.

My reasons were, first that I was aiming at world records and the two 5,000 and 10,000 m races were really too close for full recovery

by even a hundred per cent fit person. Four races would have been foolhardy for anyone to attempt. Also, the standard of the other British distance runners—Sando, Green, Eyre and Hesketh—was such that the maximum points could be expected without my taking part. So I was not letting down the team.

We were taken to Bøsen Sports School and were graciously given half an hour to change and train and be dressed ready for a dinner at a castle 6 miles away. I was stiff, and in any case my training schedule which Gerschler had set me was to run for a minimum of one hour to prepare myself properly to race 10,000 m two days later. Team Captain Whittle came down and told me I must stop training, otherwise I would be left behind. I went on running, so I had to hitch-hike to the castle after doing my hour in the woods. All this fuss seemed even sillier when we had to wait for 30 minutes at the castle before the meal was served.

I watched the first day's events after visiting the British Trade Exhibition. Fred Green and Len Eyre ran the 5,000 m and planned to alternate the lead. It so happened that the Swedes had arranged to do the same. The race was a jumble and many elbow clashes resulted. One newspaper had a picture of the racers linked together like dancers in one of their encounters. Fred Green won in 14 min 27·2 s and said to me, "You wouldn't have won today." So I bet him that I would run the first half of the 10,000 m faster than his race. Thanks to my determination to stick to my training schedule, I was free from the effects of the Berlin race by next morning. I warmed up under the stadium for an hour and a quarter and at the start roared off on my own. For three-quarters of the race I was ahead of Zatopek's world record, but I paid for my impudence and faded badly towards the end, to record the second fastest time in the world. The first half was 0·5 s slower than Green's race the previous day, so I lost my bet too. My legs were even stiffer after that tremendous effort, so I put on my track suit and jogged on the grass while Britain lost the last event, the 4 × 400 m relay, and with it the match. I had to continue jogging for a while to loosen my muscles, and consequently was the last man in the showers.

This time the team management came in to the dressing room to tell me that I must come out for the dinner (there is always a dinner) or I should be in trouble. I was so tired then—it was 10 p.m.—that I decided that I must get some sleep. I told the manager that I would

not be going to the dinner. He replied that it was very discourteous of me to have left it so late before backing out. Again I was urged that it was imperative for me to attend because the British Ambassador was to be there and the trophy for the best performance at the meeting would definitely be for me.

At this I exploded. Angrily I said I thought the competition should come first and social junketing second! I was exhausted by my efforts and by all the unnecessary functions I had to attend during the tour. I had to attend the dinner because there was no transport out to Bøsen. I had cooled off by then and I apologized for losing my temper in the dressing-room. But I made it clear that I stuck to my opinion that athletics should come before social engagements. Ironically, the best performance trophy was awarded to Brian Shenton for his fine double sprint. He thoroughly deserved it.

Before we left Bøsen we had some fine fun when the competition was over. Walter Hesketh put on a juggling show and ended up with broken eggs and plates all over the floor. "Even the greatest jugglers make mistakes, lad," said Walter in his best Lancashire accent. There were canoes and a swimming pool by the lakeside, and Walter was the victim of practical joking which went a bit too far. He was paddling close inshore, and we soaked him as he passed us. He retaliated by hitting water on to us with the paddle, which duly broke. He then drifted inshore and John Savidge lifted the bow of the canoe out until water poured over the sides where Hesketh sat at the stern. Walter cried out for mercy. "I can't swim, John," he yelled. But John launched him out into the lake with a tremendous heave. The canoe floated a long way out until all we could see was Walter's shirt tied by its sleeves to the broken oar. A rescue boat went out and we heard later that Walter panicked when they reached him and overturned the canoe. He was trapped underneath and had to be hauled out half dead.

Several of us flew straight on to another athletic meeting at Oslo while the rest went home. My legs were still stiff from the race in Stockholm. At Bislet Stadium, Oslo, I felt very strange running round the track in the 3,000 m. Afterwards John Savidge asked me why I was racing with bow legs. That evening I could not sleep because I had had a series of disturbed nights, so I went dancing with Frank Steffensen at the Oslo Rowing Club out on an island in the harbour. I caught a cold in the chilly night as we returned to town in a

motor launch. The result was a thick head and a fine cold to take home to England after a month away.

Some of my Norwegian friends suggested that I should be mathematical and carry a stopwatch as Nurmi did when racing. "The way I use my arms when running I wouldn't be able to see whether it was half past six or dinner time," I replied.

The season tailed off with two British records over 2 miles and a share in the world record for the 4 × 1,500 m relay. My last race was a 4-mile world best, after which I was presented with a stopwatch which has helped me in my training for many years since. I was still dreaming of beating Zatopek, but that October I felt I had a long way to go.

The end of the season enabled me to get away to see my mentor and coach, Waldemar Gerschler at Freiburg. At Mulhouse in Alsace I had four hours to wait for the train connection. The town was very sleepy as I strolled through the streets. I sat with some fishermen by the canal, watching swans drifting slowly across the green water. Silence was broken only by the occasional whirring of a reel. After rushing about on planes, trains and running tracks, it was wonderful just to dream away the time. There is nothing to equal this peaceful way of spending an afternoon, and I for my part felt refreshed as I walked through a little park on the way back to the station.

"*Ceux qui ne voient pas!*" This was spoken by three little children holding a collecting box up to me. Their eyes, their little faces, were infinitely appealing. They burst in on my thoughts abruptly as I ambled along. I gathered my senses and questioned them. "*Pour ceux qui ne voient pas,*" they repeated. I scratched my head, then suddenly realized they were collecting for the blind—those who don't see. I dug my hand in my pocket and willingly gave some francs from my meagre supply. Their faces changed from anxiety to delight and I ruffled one little rascal's hair as they thanked me.

After this encounter I looked at the flowers in the gardens, the big trees and the swans in the peaceful canal, with a new delight, and I felt a tightness in my throat. Many people never saw all these wonderful things. I was pleased that the money which I had intended for a meal on the train was on its way to help some blind person at least to hear and feel more of life.

The train was soon off on the last few miles across the border to Germany and Freiburg. In France the houses are friendly-looking, with trees growing naturally in the green gardens. I found the French

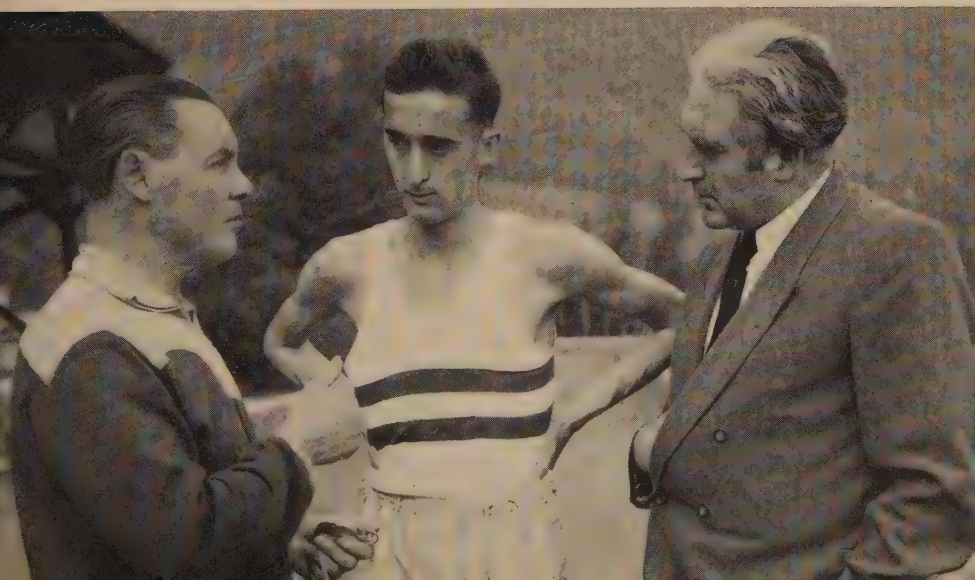
people delightful individualists who let life drift by like a leaf on a river. But crossing the border you see the difference at once. The road-sweeper has a uniform, and you feel that every one is clearly cast in a social type. All are smart, dignified and strictly correct. Even the houses stand to attention with square shutters and orderly gardens. Everything is regimented and the police are the overlords. In Germany you do what you are told. On the wooden seats of the German train, I winced at the thought of having to spend a week like a wooden soldier. But I soon discovered that the Germans are like other people under their mask of discipline.

I was met at Freiburg by a charming young woman who turned out to be Frau Gerschler, and when we arrived at the University Sports Centre I was introduced to her two daughters, Brigitta and Gisela. Gerschler had been working hard and couldn't be at the station, but we met at the house over a meal, when a large family sat round the table. Staying in the house was a student who was studying medicine. He was a fine javelin thrower and we became friends. He told me of the days when he was a boy during the war. At the age of 14 he had been enlisted in the anti-aircraft unit and had spent many nights firing guns at British aeroplanes. He was told by the Nazis that Englishmen were terrible people, but he assured me that he had used his own judgment.

The object of my trip to Freiburg was for Gerschler and his team of scientists to examine me in every detail to determine my exact physical strength and potentiality. I was subjected to a session on a treadmill and was put through physiological tests. Professor Reindell told me my heart was the most powerful he had ever tested. It took two whole days to complete the examination, which was so exacting that I was exhausted physically and mentally by the end. On the third day we worked hard on a training test. An electrocardiograph was set up on the track and readings were taken of my heart during three hours of running. Before the test I warmed up for one hour and then ran 25 × 200 m runs in 28 s each, with an interval of two minutes jogging between. After every fifth run I lay on a rubber stretcher for the electrocardiograph reading to be taken. To finish off I ran easily for 30 minutes and had the final electrocardiograph reading. The results of all these trials enabled Gerschler and Professor Reindell to devise a series of training routines suitable for my particular strength. As you can realize, these routines were not necessarily suitable for any

Waldemar Gerschler times us on the track at Freiburg.

I talk to Gerschler and Professor Herbert Reindell during a break in training.



Emil Zatopek has always been my idol. I talk and train with him in Prague, 1955.

Zatopek urges me to go faster in the 5,000 metres at Manchester in 1955.

other athlete, and I believe that several English runners who attempted to copy my training rigidly in the years after 1953 broke down as a result.

After these busy days, we drove into the Black Forest and enjoyed the autumn beauty of the trees and the Black Forest's quiet glades and high mountains, which command views of the distant Vosges on the one hand and the Swiss Alps on the other.

On the return journey to England I passed through Paris and saw Michel Claire of *L'Équipe* and told him I was confident I would be able to achieve surprising results over 5,000 m in the near future. When I said that I thought that a time of 13 min 40 s was a possibility (world record was then 13 min 58·2 s) he looked at me incredulously. My prediction was printed in *L'Équipe* and many people openly ridiculed me. They were finally convinced that I was mad.

Chapter 14

CROSS-COUNTRY ORDEALS

BACK at my parents' home at Coulsdon, day after day of training were broken by only three races—the Inter-Banks, Surrey, and National Championships. Consequently, it was my first cross-country season with an unbeaten record.

In the Surrey Cross-country race I learned another lesson I shall never forget. The event was on a very foggy Saturday and, in my opinion, should not have been held at all. Fog was so thick that the runners disappeared from view after a few yards. I was very fit and raced clear of the others by a large margin—over a minute at one stage. But I breathed in so much poison that it affected my health and ability immediately. The others caught me and I won by only a small margin from club mate, Peter Driver. Afterwards I coughed and coughed, bringing up soot and blood. I was in bed for a week with bad congestion of the lungs and I was lucky not to develop pneumonia. Never run in fog—it is dangerous.

Every day, with club mates Laurie Reed and David Smith, I trained on the Netherne track except when it was unserviceable in bad weather. We had to prepare the surface first. In the dark winter nights we spent up to an hour pulling a huge roller round. It was made for a team of horses. One of us picked out the stones by the light of a torch. Training kept us out until 10.30 many nights, but it was making us extremely fit and stronger than ever.

When we couldn't use the Netherne track the three of us ran round the Surrey roads. One day there was a snow storm, and we ran for about three hours clad in two tracksuits each, plus woollen hats, thick socks and gloves. We looked like snowmen as we pounded

round the lanes. Laurie Reed became so tired that I ran behind pushing him up the steeper slopes.

At about that time I received invitations from half a dozen American universities and was on the verge of accepting one when Peter Wilson of the *Daily Mirror* helped me to get a position as representative with the paint firm of L. G. Wilkinson. At the beginning of March I began my new job. Thanks to the generosity of my new employers, Mr Loftus and Mr Hunt, I was able to give more time to training without staying out late at night. Leaving Lloyds Bank was a great wrench, as I had many friends in their Athletic Club and my manager at Croydon, Mr Frayling, had been extremely generous in his attitude to me. I often think that, from a business point of view, leaving Lloyds was the biggest mistake I have made.

The new job entailed driving a car. I had the use of an Austin A40 which was delivered on my birthday. The same evening I drove as a learner driver for the first time in my life some 20 miles round the dark, winding lanes of Surrey. Later, while driving home from the BBC through Notting Hill Gate, I grazed the rear of a lorry. My colleague from Lloyds Bank, Harold Teague, was co-driving with me because of my learner status, and he was a nervous wreck by the end of our trip.

As the weather improved in March and April I was able to run better times and became confident that my form in the coming season would be better. In May I visited Gerschler again and trained so hard that I spent the rest of the day sleeping. While I was in Germany Roger Bannister ran the first under-four-minute mile. Franz Stampfl, who coached him, was reported to have said that he could make a four-minute miler out of any man. At Sloane Square track a Rolls-Royce arrived one day, and a middle-aged man with a distinct paunch climbed out and ran round the track. This happened several days running until Stampfl couldn't contain his curiosity. When he asked the stout man what he was up to he replied that he was training for a four-minute mile.

When I returned to London I was met by my parents, brother Peter and Neil Allen. On the way from the Airport I had a crash on the Great West Road at Hounslow. I struck the rear of the Canadian High Commissioner's car as it braked unexpectedly at traffic lights. There was not a mark on the big American car but my poor Austin was pushed in at the front and the offside front wheel was jammed by the

mudguard. I was unable to open the driving-door and Neil Allen had smashed the driving-mirror with his head. However, two police patrolmen were standing on the pavement, and they took my part in the dispute. I was in the City the next day and saw to my surprise newspaper placards announcing 'Pirie in car crash'. I bought a copy of the *Evening News* from a cockney news vendor. He looked up and said, hand on his heart, "Blimey, guv, I fought you was dead."

The track season started rather quietly with a couple of wins for me over the mile and 3 miles. Geoff Warren came early from Australia for the Empire Games and joined Laurie Reed and me in our training. We ran through the woods three days of the week and on tracks the other four. During a session in the woods I felt a sharp pain in the left foot. The following week Ken Thomson, my friend from Toronto, came to Walton-on-Thames where I ran 880 yds in the Heathfield Trophy. The number of competitors made heats necessary, and I bettered Bill Nankeville's record in winning my heat with 1 min 54·6 s. Bill, who was running the mile, said, "That won't last long." Obviously he was thinking of bettering it later himself. I replied, "It won't—just wait until the final." This was dressing-room conversation, but I lived up to my word and did a new record of 1 min 53 s in the final. Forty minutes after that I raced a third ½-mile in the Surrey Medley Relay Championships, clocking a time of 1 min 54·6 s. The pain in my foot became worse with the poundings the ½ miles had given it. An X-ray at Balham Hospital did not reveal any trouble, so I continued training despite the pain.

The following Saturday, June 19, I ran a mile at Lloyds Bank Sports Day in a new world grass-track record of 4 min 5·2 s with Brian Hewson running a fine 4 min 5·4 s for second place. That was extraordinarily good for Hewson because it was his first competitive mile. That race aggravated further the injury to my foot, and I was forced to stop training.

For nearly a month I fretted away the days,visiting various masseurs, trying without success to find a remedy for my foot. The final blow came on July 10 in the AAA Championships. Several papers said that Pirie was to be a non-starter because he was scared of the challenge. This aroused me and, despite my foot, I started in the 6 miles to prove that I was not, and never would be, afraid of a challenge. I ran 5½ miles with searing pain in my foot; then I accidentally trod on the concrete edge of the track and broke a cracked metatarsal bone.

I fell and had to be carried to the dressing-room by John Savidge. Mick Mays the masseur took me home, and I lay in bed till Monday, when John (Spider) Webb, a complete stranger to me, came from North London to Coulsdon, drove me the 40 miles to Highgate Hospital and back home. At hospital Dr Stidolph examined my foot and diagnosed a fracture which was confirmed by the X-ray plates. There was nothing to do but strap up the foot and rest for a month.

This accident showed me who my true friends were. No official help was extended to me, and all the people who had shaken my hand a short while ago disappeared. It was left to John Webb and Peter Wilson of the *Daily Mirror* to help me. On July 11 Fred Freen won his first British title and world record by beating Chataway in 13 min 32·2 s. He sent me a programme of the meeting. "See if you can beat this one, Charlie," he had scrawled on it.

The accident to my foot cost me at least two or three years' progress in my athletic career. It meant that I had to fight from behind. I listened to the European Games on the radio. Before these Games it was obvious that Vladimir Kuts was the main contender for the 5,000 m, for just previously he had raced 3,000 m in a time very close to the world record. Laurie Reed and I listened to that race and were amazed when the race commentator, Rex Alston, described Kuts racing 100 yds in front of the others. What had gone wrong? Was Chataway ill? We were perplexed to hear Chataway say later that he never thought Kuts was capable of keeping up such a pace. That day my foot really itched to get racing again.

It wasn't long before I was able to start light training. At the end of August Peter Driver, our new Empire Games Champion, and I went for a holiday in Norway. We had a fine time but I couldn't help thinking with some regret of the races I was missing. In Norway we again stayed with Pedre Lahlun, enjoying the solitude of Voss and the surrounding mountains. Pedre accompanied us to a village dance, and we took part in a porridge-eating contest for the Western Norway Championship. The porridge was red-hot billstickers' paste and had to be helped down with sour milk. Pedre finished his huge plateful before the rest of us had managed two or three spoonfuls of the horrid stuff. He won a lantern, and we all had the consolation prizes of bad tummies for the next few days. Fishing—unsuccessful as usual—took up many hours, and I drove the village postman's old motor-bike along the farm tracks to the lake, often going in the ditch because

I couldn't hold the powerful machine. One day I ran in the mountains for four hours and realized my strength had returned.

Shortly after returning to England I had my first competitions since the AAA Championships in July when my foot cracked up. I won the 2 miles in 8 min 54·8 s. Ten minutes later in the 5,000 m race, Kuts ran faster than I had run when he passed the 2-mile post. Chataway managed to reverse the European result and win by a foot, to break the world record into the bargain with a time of 13 min 51·6 s. It depressed me that I had to be a spectator at the fastest 5,000 m race up to that date and a race where, but for bad luck, I might have influenced the result.

The track season was over, and the days passed into winter with the daily chore of training until November 13. That Saturday I travelled to Manchester for a special 10,000-m race with Derek Ibbotson and several others. It was a bleak day with pouring rain. Derek was a young lad at the time and only ran 2½ miles before stopping. My time was 30 min 7·2 s. This did not promise well for the Criterium des As race the following week in Brussels. Peter Driver, Josef Kovacs (runner-up to Zatopek in the European 10,000-m championships), the Hungarian Iharos, Mihalic of Yugoslavia and others were in the field.

We had a short run in a park on arrival in Brussels. Early breakfast next day, Sunday, was essential, for the race started at 11 a.m. The spectators turned up in their thousands for the morning's sport. There were some 4,000 competitors. The athletes assembled at the Field of Evere Military Camp and, with the exception of the big-race competitors, everyone underwent a medical examination—for safety's sake, I suppose. The course for the race was fenced off and was the only clear space to be seen. The sun shone and brought the frost out of the ground to leave a slippery surface on the ungrassed parts. We had to race three laps of 2¼ miles. Before the start we ran round the circuit to familiarize ourselves with any difficulties such as holes, tree roots and other dangerous obstacles. In the race I was in the middle of a bunch until after 200 yds, when the initial sprint was fading. Then I made my effort, gradually cutting through the slowing runners. In another 100 yds I was in the lead and ran hard to build up a gap of some 20 yds on the rest of the field. After a mile the Hungarian Kovacs caught up, and we ran neck-and-neck for 3 miles more, with the remainder dropping 200 yds behind. On the middle circuit I felt Kovacs weakening, so I ran harder. Gradually a gap opened, with

Kovacs losing 80 yds by the finish. Mihalic of Yugoslavia was third 37 s later, followed closely by Peter Driver and Van de Wattyne. These two had a terrific sprint for the tape which Peter just won. Poor Ken Wood finished nearly last because the cold air had steamed up his spectacles and he fell several times.

The dark, cold winter days passed uneventfully—training, training and yet more training. Here is my schedule for a typical week.

December 7. 1 hour warm-up followed by 10 × ½ mile in 2 min 20 s to 2 min 25 s.
15 minutes' 'warm-down'. Total, 3¼ hours training.
December 8. ¾ hour warm-up. 10 × 220 yds in 26–28 s.
10 minutes' jogging.
Hail and a gale. Soaked to skin.
December 9. 1 hour running in a gale and heavy rain.
December 10. 1 hour running in heavy rain.
December 11. 30 minutes' warm-up.
2 × ½ mile in 2 min 4 s and 2 min 6 s.
4 × ¼ mile in 56–58 s.
10 minutes' 'warm-down'. Total 1½ hours.
December 12. 1 hour warm-up.
10 × ¼ mile, 64 s.
20 minutes' 'warm-down'. Very cold and windy.

At Christmas I visited Germany in freezing weather to see Gerschler for the usual examination and advice. We decided that I should concentrate on speed. This would only be possible by sacrificing a great deal of stamina. Despite this I had a successful cross-country season—possibly my best ever—in January, February, and March of 1955.

After winning the Surrey Championships on my home ground of Farthing Downs, I was selected to represent Surrey in the Inter-Counties at Liverpool on January 15. This race was held on farmland frozen solid and lightly covered with snow. The English Cross-country team manager warned all the internationals not to start because of the risk of injuring themselves. Mike Maynard, who had finished second in the Surrey race, withdrew from our team. I decided to run because we had a great chance of winning the team race for the first time since the war. I chose my shortest pair of spikes, and at the start I was left. I seemed to stand on one spot with my feet skating

about on the icy ground. I had no heavy, solid-soled, long-spiked shoes that would have done for that course, so I spent all my energy slipping about and bruising each leg with the other until they were black and blue. Even so, I ran into the lead with Ken Norris, hanging on until the last mile, when I slid out of control for several yards down a slope. I said some really rude words and told Ken to get on with it. I was frightened of breaking my leg at that moment. I jogged the last mile, finishing in sixth place, with badly damaged legs from that foolish race.

By February I had already lost a fair amount of my endurance because of my training programme. In the Southern Championships I was running fourth after 2 miles, third after 5, second at 7 miles, but first at the finish. I had a struggle to cover the distance but my spurt of speed at the finish was superior. This was a good sign that the desired results were being achieved. The National at Cardington brought me my hat-trick of wins. I drove to Bedford the day before and had a run round the muddy course, followed by lunch in the officers' mess. I managed to persuade the organizer to change the course, substituting a grass field for a very dangerous stretch of newly ploughed land.

In the race I started easily. As we ran into the mud after ½ mile I went hell-for-leather. This allowed me to make a 40-yds break on the field by the end of the first lap. It was there that the spectators were allowed to spread all over the course. I ran full tilt into the crowd of people who surged backwards and forwards trying to catch a glimpse of the runners. I struck many of them as I tried frantically to run on. Fortunately nobody was injured but I lost my lead. Eddie Kirkup of Rotherham passed me, and the next group were on my heels. I was exasperated and raced furiously across the mud to get 40 yds ahead again. On the third and final lap I lost my left shoe in a deep patch of mud. The other one had to come off so that I could run properly balanced. I had run 7 miles and I said to myself "Nothing is going to stop me now." Over the last 2 miles I increased my lead by a further 11 s so being bare-footed was in fact a blessing. Pat Ranger, the RAF champion, was second—200 yds behind—and Ken Norris was third.

South London Harriers made a clean sweep of the medals, winning all three team titles in the senior, junior, and youths' categories. Roland Langridge was second to Alan Cocking in the youths' race to give us

further honours. That was the only occasion to date when all the national titles had gone to one club.

The team for the International Championships to be held in San Sebastian was then announced. My ambition was to become international cross-country champion and I was in form to run away with the race then. But in San Sebastian I was struck with a severe attack of influenza and my room mate, Pat Ranger, suffered badly with dysentery. Pat was leading the field with a substantial margin when he was forced to disappear into a wood with his illness. He was able to continue and finished a mere 40 s behind the eventual winner, Sando.

Laurie Richardson, ECCU secretary, and the finest team manager England has ever had, stayed behind with me for a week as I recuperated. When I was well again we took a train to Paris. The journey was no ordinary one. Scotland were due to play France in Paris the next day, and throughout the night there were uproars as parties of Rugger fanatics said goodbye to their families and boarded the train. The beaming faces, raucous laughter and slurred speech, were a fine advertisement for the French wine industry and the Frenchmen's Rugby enthusiasm. We only got snatches of sleep. We were still tired when we had to face the ordeal of fighting the huge scrum at the station. It took at least 30 minutes to get off the platform. Michel Clair of *L'Équipe* met us and nearly persuaded me to stay and see l'Humanité Cross race which was to be held the next day, for Emil Zatopek and Vladmir Kuts were racing.

But I wanted to get home. After a short rest I started training again. Two weeks later I ran in the London to Brighton Relay, which SLH won handsomely despite a much weakened team due to injuries and illness. Before the relay the editor of a British athletic magazine wrote to me asking for a photograph of all the SLH national championship teams. I replied that he could have the photos after we had won the London to Brighton race. The editor sarcastically replied that we weren't considered as possible winners. The promoting newspaper's athletic reporter also made a bloomer about this race. Despite the fact that my friend Ken Norris had been only a minor-place winner during the cross-country season, his Brighton Relay lap record—a fine performance—was heralded as superior to Zatopek's world record for 10,000 m. What nonsense! Ken would agree that this sort of irresponsible comment causes great disappointment when the Olympic Games come round.

The track season was upon us once more. Speed training was still my aim, and it was showing good results before we had put our cross-country kit away. I started off with a solo mile in 4 min 6 s, followed by the world's second fastest 2,000 m in Manchester. Ibbotson was leading at the bell but was 25 yds back at the finish. Even though he had been a leading runner for some years, this was the first occasion that gained Derek recognition. He ran a fine race. The following week-end I was selected to represent Surrey in the 1-mile event of the Inter-Counties Championships held in conjunction with the British Games. On the Saturday before my heat Tabori won the international mile, beating Chataway and Hewson, with all three under 4 min. My heat-time of 4 min 9·2 s was an anti climax for everyone, including myself.

On Sunday evening I tore a muscle in my shoulder when I passed a dumbell to Laurie Reed, and had an injection to kill the pain. I felt confident of my ability to race on Monday because the injection allowed the arm painless exercise. But this exercise must have torn more tissues and, as the injection wore off, I was in agony, hardly sleeping all night. That taught me never to have an injection to permit exercise with an injury. I was forced to withdraw from the race and instead watched Iharos run his 2-mile world record. He was magnificent, and I felt he could have run much faster than he did. His last ½ mile was run in under 2 min. Phenomenal!

Although Gerschler's training was reaping rewards I had to wait for the right race to use the devastating sprint it had produced. This was soon to come. After another visit to Gerschler early in June I was invited with a team of South London Harriers to run in Brussels. I took a train from Germany to Brussels. Peter Driver won the 5,000 m after a last lap tussle with the Hungarian Beres. My brother Peter was fourth. The race I competed in was against the Hungarian aces, Iharos and Tabori. The initial pace was slow but I made a break on the last lap and sprinted home from Tabori with 3 yds to spare. Iharos was third, 20 yds away.

At the AAA Championships, I chose the 6-mile race. One pre-race habit I had practised for two years, at the suggestion of Mal Whitfield, Olympics 800-m champion, consisted in depriving myself of drink for the whole day. It was sweltering hot on this occasion, and I was thirsty by lunchtime. By the time I warmed up for the race my body was nearly dehydrated. Still I resisted taking a drink. I do not remember

more than snatches of the 24 laps of the dry track before my senses left me completely. I vaguely remember setting my mind on sprinting on the final lap. When the moment came I sprinted up the straight past Ken Norris to reach the winning post first. I went blind before the line and shouted "I can't see!", but luckily ran into the fence and was held on to it. I passed out then and woke up on the grass. It was not until 20 or 30 minutes later, I believe, that I was able to leave the arena with assistance. As I lay in the dressing room recovering, a pressman asked me what had happened. I explained that I had been in the habit of not taking any drink at all on the day of a competition. I was glad I had won, I added, for it compensated for feeling so ill. After being sick from salt drinks I began to recover. A friend came in to see me and I said, "Well, I must wait until tomorrow to collect the cup." His surprised retort was, "What cup?" Only then did I discover that I had run a lap short.

I was dazed and let the news sink in slowly. This race had taught me another lesson—always drink as much water as the body requires, for it is obviously essential to drink on such a hot day. So much for the habit I had acquired from Mal Whitfield and one which I had practised so assiduously in gaining two world records.

Chapter 15

TRIP TO THE WILD WEST

My brother Peter and I flew by BOAC Stratocruiser to Canada for a holiday with our friend Ken Thomson in August, 1955. Over Idlewild, New York, the plane had to circle for an hour. Planes were 'stacked up' every 1,000 ft, owing to morning fog. After a long but interesting wait we were cleared by the Customs and had to carry our heavy bags through the airport buildings for about ½ mile. We had our first taste of America and its sultry summer. What a relief it was in the air-conditioned restaurant. We ordered steaks and luscious milk shakes. The Americans wore lightweight suits or T-shirts and jeans. We were rather out of place in our heavy English clothes. When our steaks arrived we were taken aback by their size and were even more astonished when the bill arrived. It was the equivalent of £2.

Soon we were on our way to Toronto where Ken Thomson and his fiancee, Marilyn, met us. The heat and humidity were high there too, following a tornado. Athletics is a poor Cinderella in Canada to the big sisters Hockey and American Football. The university track where we trained was hard as iron, and the infield was fenced off for the sole use of footballers. It was impossible to use the inside lane of the track for fear of injuring oneself on the tall fence. The Canadian boys were fine athletes but weren't given the facilities they deserved. We trained with them mostly, but when the temperature was in the nineties it wasn't possible. So we spent a lot of time in the swimming pool at Mississauga House. The garden there was continually sprayed, leaving pools of water under the trees. This made a fine training ground as the water splashed up refreshingly. Sometimes the temperature was too high even for training on the lawn during the day, so we waited until the late evening to run on the nearby golf course.

The University track was the venue of a small athletics meeting the first Saturday of our holiday. We laughed our heads off when we read in the papers that I was to attack Roger Bannister's Canadian mile record of 3 min 58·8 s. It was the first I had heard of it, and I would never have said such a nonsensical thing. It would have been as easy for me to fly to the moon as to beat Bannister's great record. That day too the humid temperature was in the nineties. Some runners warmed up for the race but I was only able to exercise a little in the dressing-room. As was to be expected the race was rather a flop. On the last lap Wes Santee opened up with a tremendous sprint. He covered the last furlong in less than 24·5 s. Fred Dwyer and I crossed the line together and he got the verdict for second place. But the weather was so hot that the time was very slow—just over 4 min 11 s.

Shortly afterwards we ran at the small go-ahead town of Exeter, Ontario. This was one of the liveliest towns I have ever had the pleasure of visiting. It had little more than a main street and this was deserted as we drove in because everyone was at the 'trots'. As we drove nearer to the racecourse we could hear the cheering. The place had a decidedly Western atmosphere. Men wore broad-brimmed hats and colourful shirts. "Yippies" and "Howdies" greeted us as we were driven round the racecourse. There was a running track in an adjacent field. It had been made specially for the race we were to run that afternoon. The mayor and other officials were proud of the track, and the local press had already announced that it was my intention to attack a world record on it, bless their hearts. This small town's example of providing a track for one race involving a dozen runners put many cities to shame. Throughout the race the people cheered madly, and I felt rather ashamed at being unable to realize their ambition of a record, though I tried as hard as I could. Afterwards there was a reception and each athlete was presented with a marvellous memento of the visit. Mine was a huge silver tray, suitably engraved.

Following our Exeter trip, Fred Dwyer, brother Peter and myself drove to Lake Couchiching (Lake of Many Winds) to spend a few days at a sports centre. We went running, swimming and sunbathing. One day, when we were out in the car that the Austin Motor Co. had lent us, I turned a corner and came face to face with another car. We both swerved, and then it dawned on me that I ought to be driving on the right-hand side of the road. Next we drove to Hamilton, the 'Little Scotland' of Ontario. Our host, Norman Levitt, was in the

scrap-car business. At his premises tall stacks of cars waiting to be smashed made an impressive sight. Some of them had only suffered minor damage and would have fetched a good price anywhere outside the USA or Canada.

The races at Hamilton were held at half-time during a football match. Fred Dwyer and I were to have a friendly race over 2,000 m—1¼ miles—and again the papers announced that we were attacking the world record. This time we were rather annoyed because these stories of world-record attempts were being invented and were very misleading. Unfortunately sportsmen have no control over this unfair misrepresentation.

The football teams were made up of Scotsmen, the crowds were Scottish and the referee a Scot. It was a lively affair but would have made Sir Stanley Rous weep. Shouts from the crowd such as, "Smash him up." "Kick him in the teeth, mon." "Ref, did ye no see that foul?" and much ruder comments, made the time pass quickly.

Our sports meeting was held next door to a baseball match jammed to capacity, but only a handful of spectators watched us. At the end of the football match the crowds staggered out leaving an assortment of bottles on the terraces. The number of empties would nearly have broken the record for an Australian sports meeting.

Our holiday was over all too soon. We flew back to New York and a friend drove us round the city. We were stunned by the volume of traffic on the dual-carriage highway. This road funnelled cars into New York between the rooftops, over cloverleaf intersections and finally across a two-level bridge over the Hudson. The police have absolute authority over the traffic in New York, because if there is a hold-up, a jam of immense proportions builds up in a few minutes. We were told that on some occasions it took a day to sort out a big jam. At traffic lights no-one moves until the cop gives the signal. Heavy lorries are not permitted to use the main streets except for the express purpose of making a turn, otherwise they pay a heavy fine. Cars towed away for parking too long may cost a hundred dollars (£35) to recover. New York is the most overawing, fantastic city I have ever seen, but it left me cold. The rush, noise, exhaust smoke, dirt on the streets and size of the place, are too much for any man to endure and remain in good health. We were guests at a beautiful home on Long Island in quiet, wooded land, close to a little harbour. On the blue water floated sleek yachts and motor launches. This was a

boater's paradise, one of the hundreds of such places hidden among the inlets around Long Island, all within commuting distance of the city.

We flew home to blissfully cool weather in London and inexpensive living. As a result of the tiring travelling I was forced to withdraw from the Great Britain *v.* France meeting at Bordeaux the next week-end. Thus my next athletic engagement was the British team's tour to Moscow and Prague. We were flown by Viscount to Helsinki only, and had to wait there for a Russian plane to take us on. In Helsinki we were housed for one night at Otaniemi, a school for physical education and the home of the Iron Curtain countries' teams during the Olympic Games in 1952. I realized how the years were passing. Many of the old faces I knew at those Games had now disappeared. Roger Bannister, Bill Nankeville, Les Lewis, Arthur Wint, McDonald Bailey and a score of others, were no longer with us. This feeling of emptiness was increased as we made a detour to the silent Olympic Stadium for the benefit of those among the party who were only schoolboys at the time of the Games three years before.

At Otaniemi most of us trained in the pinewoods or, for a novelty, inside the large covered hall used for training horses and for indoor racing. At dawn next morning I ran for 45 minutes in the woods and stopped among the pine trees at the edge of a lake, marvelling at the silence. After breakfast there was a surprise visit from the famous Finnish athlete, Paavo Nurmi. That was quite a thrill, and several of us were lucky enough to have a chat with him.

From Helsinki onwards we were in the hands of the Russians. Only two planes were available to Leningrad. They were two-engined IL 12 s, and it was necessary for them to make two trips to handle all the team. I was in the first party to arrive at Leningrad, and we had to wait about four hours before the Moscow connections turned up. This would not have been so bad if anyone had known what was happening, for we could have done some training. Even the Russians hadn't a clue as to when we might leave.

The strange part of Russian air travel was the absence of sensible safety precautions. There was apparently no method at all. The bags were loaded on board *en masse*, we climbed in and the door was slammed as if we were on a motor-coach tour. The plane taxied to the end of the runway and took off without any test of the engines. I must admit that I kept my fingers crossed each time this happened in the crude Russian planes.

The airport at Leningrad was reasonable. By this I mean that it had runways, though the ground between was still pitted and scarred from the war. The terminus was an old, Georgian-style house. The furniture was covered with soiled dust-sheets, and the piano hadn't been tuned since the Revolution. Nevertheless, ¼-miler Peter Higgins managed to pound some tunes out of it, and we enjoyed a sing-song as only the mad English can. Besmocked and booted Russians gathered to gape at our antics. We felt like revellers in a cemetery.

From Leningrad to Moscow we flew over monotonous countryside. There was hardly a sign of habitation except for the odd farmhouse. No tractors, or highways or animals were in evidence. We could see for ourselves because, not being pressurized, the plane flew fairly low. I was particularly interested in the plane's crude but robust construction. Huge bolts secured the exhausts to the engine nacelles, the riveting was irregular and lumpy, while the windows consisted of two parallel sheets of plastic with holes punched through to allow fresh air to enter the cabin. There was a heater, but it was so positioned that one side of the cabin was extremely hot and the other was freezing cold. We looked a motley crew, one half in shirt-sleeves and the other half in overcoats or tracksuits. We waited eagerly to see Moscow but were not impressed. However, the skyline was unusual, not unlike Istanbul's with the onion-shaped towers here and there. On the airfield were many planes like ours, a lot of replicas of American Dakotas and, in the distance, some sleek, military jets, one resembling a US B47 Stratojet. As we taxied towards the airport buildings we could see a large crowd waiting to welcome us.

Although an organized reception of flowers and speeches is stereotyped in the Communist countries, the welcome was as genuine as any we received. For some of us it was a reunion with old friends. We were taken inside the terminal buildings and given a really thorough going-over by news men and radio commentators. With no formalities except the surrender of our passports, we were 'free' in Russia. Not so the newspapermen who came with us. They were delayed for a long time, apparently to show that they weren't really welcome.

Outside, coaches waited for us. They were already filled with diesel fumes, offset by Russian perfume. Then we had our first taste of Russian driving. The trick was to get into top gear as quickly as possible. This made the engine and the whole bus tinkle and shudder. The highway we had seen from the plane was pot-holed and cor-

Murray Halberg, Shirley and I on the Cocos Islands, 1958.

The astonishing Sverre Fjelstad with a Laplander and his white reindeer.

It looks easy enough! John
Disley, myself and Peter
Driver in the three miles at
Manchester, 1955.

But after the race I really needed the support of that fine athletics correspondent, Roy Moor.

rugated because of the heat. On inclines the driver allowed the engines almost to stall before he went through his gear-change antics. In the suburbs there were many dilapidated houses and barrack-like areas where civilians lived.

We lived in the huge Moscow Hotel facing Red Square. From the front windows was a view of the Kremlin. One wide flight of stairs connected the first ten or twelve storeys of the hotel. The last four or five storeys had no stairs and could only be reached by lifts. What a jump in case of fire! Keys to rooms on each floor were held by a porter on the landing, and you could not get to your room without passing the porters, who noted your every movement in a book. The corridor on each floor is nearly 100 yds long, and it was quite a hike to my room at the far end.

We were given some pocket money and went to spend the roubles in the State Stores. Madeline Wooler, Derek Ibbotson and I, stopped at the GUM shop facing Red Square. This store was rather like the old shopping arcades still left in London, with alley-ways running between the departments and a glass roof high above. We headed for the gramophone records as these seemed to be the best bargains. The works of Katchachurian and Prokofiev, and assorted Russian folk-music took my fancy. Most other things were useless or beyond the scope of our pockets. The man in the street hardly noticed the Union Jacks on our blazers or the English girls in their bright summer clothes. Russians seemed to be conditioned to be unaware of anything that wasn't their own business.

From the first day of arrival a horde of people descend on the unfortunate visitor to Russia. Come and see the University, the Metro, the Bolshoi, the first—but the first—atomic power station, they urge. All these sights are shown with the excitement and gusto of boys showing their fathers round the Schoolboys' Exhibition. Next come the newsmen and radio commentators. Most people don't like to disappoint them and so they say that everything in Russia is fine, even wonderful, just to get rid of them. Those visitors who say everything is great do a disservice to themselves and their countries, for their words are used as propaganda round the world to show how good Russia and Russian life are. In fact, Russians are simply luckless people who are unaware of the wonderful world outside their dismal homeland. I felt sorry for them, for as individuals they have fine qualities.

The Russians couldn't understand why I was not interested in their propaganda efforts. Didn't I want to go sight-seeing? What? Off to the Dynamo Stadium again? Yes, again and again. I won my private battle and was able to train every day free from interference.

Chataway and Brasher had been in Moscow a week before the rest of us arrived. They were being shown the city by a girl interpreter who for political reasons, had just broken off her engagement. Whenever they mentioned anything slightly verging on the political she turned on a harangue about the peace-loving Communist on the one hand and the terrible Capitalist on the other. This became too much for our two champions to swallow. The final straw was when the interpreter said that British athletes took drugs to win races, citing Bannister as an example because of his dramatic collapses at the end of his great races. Chataway, tired of disagreeing, said with a shrug, "Oh yes, my dear, you're always right."

The meals at the Moscow Hotel were shocking. The service was even worse. Coupons were allocated by the hotel office for every meal. For dinner there would be one coupon for soup, one for a main dish and one for a sweet. This sounded OK, but instead of each of us receiving soup to begin with the waiters brought dishes at random, soup, main dish or sweet, in any order. You were liable to have three sweets or main dishes while people at the next table sat and starved. All dirty plates were left on the table and the place was just like a slum at the end of the meal. Trouble started when the unlucky ones demanded food, for athletes have voracious appetites. By the time the interpreter had passed on the request via the chief interpreter to the hotel management and probably the Kremlin, no-one knew what the devil was happening.

There were bad-tempered athletes and bad-tempered Russians. The hurdler Jack Parker, whom I had never seen ruffled, walked out in disgust one day because he waited an hour and a half and still had nothing to eat. Arrangements were supposed to have been made for a meal to be served to me at the Stadium on the day of the competition. "Yes," the interpreter said, "You will have a meal waiting at the Stadium three hours before you race." This would have allowed me to take part in the opening ceremony due a little later. On arriving at the Dynamo Stadium I searched in vain for the food and was greeted by plenty of shoulder shrugging. I went hungrily on the march past, from which Kuts was conspicuously absent. He was lucky,

having his meal and resting. By the time things had been sorted out it was too late for me to eat. This was downright bad sportsmanship or first-class gamesmanship. If the slightest thing is out of place when the Russians visit other countries they withdraw from the match like spoilt school children. I was so hungry that I eyed Kuts's muscular frame as we ran round, thinking what a tasty meal he would make. He won handsomely over the two thin Englishmen, Pirie and Norris. I was amused by the naïve press report on that 10,000-m race. The writer said, "Pirie allowed Kuts to go ahead. This was a silly thing to do." Writers of this kind of nonsense should stick to cricket. Did the fellow really think we would let Kuts beat us if we could help it? Before the race I told reporters that Kuts was half a lap better than Norris and myself, so the result might have been anticipated from our respective abilities, but of course that is the sort of statement which is never reported.

The days in Moscow were relieved by the usual cocktail party at the British Embassy. The staff were happy to talk to people from home. Their NKVD shadows, who followed them everywhere, were boring companions, though one man said they did invite them for a drink now and again.

Brian Hewson and I played a joke on Jean Scrivens and Shirley Hampton who were sharing a room. We hung all their smalls from the chandeliers. The mattress was put in the bath and even the wardrobe was dismantled and scattered around. It looked as if a bomb had hit the room. When the girls returned they had the shock of their lives. Two Russian chambermaids came to see what all the noise was about, and when they saw the room they threw up their hands and went running for the floor manager. In perfect English the poker-faced official told the girls that if they wished to have the furniture rearranged they had only to ask.

After the competitions we were taken to a reception in the Agricultural Exhibition. The grounds were extremely pleasant with sections depicting various districts of Russia. A highlight here was a concert by Russian artists. It included folk-dancing, juggling and balalaika-playing. As a novelty the balalaika player held his instrument with one hand only, fingering and plucking the strings with four fingers so fast that the eye could not follow the movements. All the artists were first-class. Before the concert there was the usual peace-and-friendship speech. One of the Embassy staff told me he had heard it

several hundred times since he had been in Moscow and added, "I could recite it myself."

There was plenty of vodka, which Jack Crump warned us to leave well alone. Who wanted to drink benzene anyway? We mixed with our opponents freely. Few could speak our opposites' language, and we tired of grinning like Cheshire cats and drawing pictures to explain things. After I left, Kuts brought a fine box of chocolates for me as a friendly gesture.

The next day we had the usual Aeroflot early start. They originally told us to be at the Airport at 5 a.m. but compromised for 6.30. The silly thing is that we had to wait until nearly 9 before leaving for Prague. We arrived there in the evening and were met by officials and photographers. Bouquets were presented to the girls, and I stood with Margaret Francis, the Manchester sprinter, for a picture. Thelma Hopkins told a pressman behind our backs that we had just become engaged. This story appeared in the Prague papers under the picture of the two of us holding flowers.

In the hotel in Prague we sighed with relief for it was a burden off our minds to get away from the oppressiveness of the USSR. But the Czechs warned us that the Russians had microphones wired in the hotel. After the twelve-hour journey had exhausted us, another athlete was silly enough to make himself more tired by running in the pouring rain round and round the park opposite the hotel.

Before the competitions we went window-shopping. The shops were gay with crystal glassware and imaginative displays. The brightly-dressed crowds milled around, making us feel alive again after the depressing austerity of Russia. The buildings in Prague are grand but the effect was marred by an awful statue of Stalin on a hillside overlooking the city. A Czech student walked along the street with us. He was anxious to practise his English. He looked up and down to see if anybody could hear him, then told us that without the Red Army there would be no Communists in Czechoslovakia.

Ken Norris and I were selected to run the 5,000 m against Zatopek, so we had a problem on our minds. The whole meeting was very exciting. Brian Hewson's victories over 1,500 m and 800 m were the best performances, rivalled closely by Diane Leather's near-world-record 800-m run. Diane would have succeeded in breaking the record if she had had closer competition.

For me the meeting was a disappointment, since I lost to Zatopek in the 10,000 m and only won the 5,000 m with a foot to spare. As we stood on the starting line for the 5,000 m Emil showed me how to breathe very fast. The two of us were so engrossed trying to out-puff each other that we did not realize the whole stadium was silent and the starter was patiently watching us playing games.

Emil was in a merry mood for the 10,000 m and, as the starter said, "Get set", he ran off some 30 yds round the track. I calmed him down, as he appeared to be extremely upset at having to return for another try. When we did start Emil allowed Frank Sando and me to shoot off, leaving him running at the correct speed. We left him a long way behind over the first half of the race, but he caught up and won by 130 yds, much to the delight of the crowd. He had so much energy in hand that as he came up to overtake us he ran alongside and urged me to go faster. I hadn't the breath to answer him.

In the evening there was an informal buffet and dance where each of the teams received a beautiful cut-glass souvenir. The following morning I woke Margaret Francis at 7.30 a.m. with a cold flannel and she nearly beat the daylights out of me—using some choice words in the process. I discovered later that she and her room mate had only been in bed half an hour after the night's festivities. Peter Hildreth, Ken Wood, Clive Adams and I, went to the Stadium to train at 9 a.m. while the rest of the team were in bed. We found Zatopek training there with some of the Czech team. We jogged, sprinted and exercised with them until nearly midday. In the dressing-room Zatopek brewed up some Brazilian tea in a jam jar with a small electric immersion heater. He put on his smart officer's uniform and proudly showed us his automatic pistol. As we crossed the river on our way into town he told us that people were not allowed to swim there except at special places. One day he was so hot after training that he couldn't resist a dip. Down to the river he went and left his uniform in the bushes. As soon as he was in the water an alert guard saw him and started shooting. Zatopek scrambled out and ran for the bushes in the nude. The posse arrived just as he was squaring his cap. When they were confronted by a high-ranking officer they rocked back on their heels, apologized and saluted. But the news reached higher circles and the delinquent was summoned before a disciplinary committee of commissars. Emil told us they scolded him and said, "You mustn't be a naughty boy."

In the evening Shirley Hampton and I were guests of certain members of the British Embassy. They were in fine spirits. The diplomats' taxi-driver was looking enviously at a bottle of cognac they carried, so they offered him a drink. The poor fellow looked up and down the street, fearful that he would be seen by a Communist official, and didn't have the courage to take a drink. At last he was persuaded. He took a terrific gulp and drove off like mad.

After dinner we went to a private party and were surprised to find a group of British newspapermen letting their hair down. Clifford Webb was singing doubtful ditties, and Desmond Hackett did a jig in the middle of the floor. Next morning it was an effort to climb out of bed. At breakfast time Zatopek came to say goodbye to the teams, promising to see us a month later in London. As we drove up to the Airport the BEA Elizabethans which were to take us home arrived and circled. The populace and the airport officials had never seen such fine planes, and they all stared admiringly. We climbed aboard and sighed as we sank back in the comfortable seats.

On reaching Coulsdon, I read a pile of letters, showed the souvenirs I had collected, and climbed into my own comfortable bed at home. These moments of homecoming were the best part of athletic trips. The distance runners were always the most fatigued of any party since our events demanded so much more energy and concentration than the others. For instance, while away that time I had covered 25,000 m (about 15 miles) in races with tremendous effort and had run 120 miles more in training, whereas men in other events did next to nothing in comparison.

Chapter 16

THE GREAT DUEL WITH ZATOPEK

After the Russian tour I thought carefully about my races and method of training. In a week or so I was due to fly to Turku in Finland for a 10,000-m race, followed by a race in Copenhagen over 5,000 m, and then back to London for 10,000 m against Zatopek. All summer my training had been sprints and shorter runs designed to improve my ability over shorter races. But I had been running the longer races—exactly the opposite from those for which training had been designed. I therefore decided to change my schedule. Every day I ran as far as I could in fast and slow style. For instance, one day I ran 6 miles round the track at a strong speed and followed this by running 60 × 220 yds, with a 50-yd easy run between them. To finish off I ran another 5 miles.

I was going much more strongly over the longer distances by the time of the Turku race, which I won in a good time. Then, two days before the race with Zatopek, I had an accident at Croydon track. After taking a shower I put my hand through a window. My right wrist was lacerated and a splinter of glass buried itself in my chest. A doctor at Croydon Hospital dug out the splinter and stitched me up. These minor injuries did not bother me, but they helped to distract my attention when I would normally have been worrying about the race. Running against Zatopek was always enjoyable, but I knew that he would fight all the way. I was tensed and ready when at last the time came on Wednesday evening.

"Good luck, Gordon," some well-wisher shouted. I mumbled and signalled thanks as I fumbled with my pins and numbers. Fixing one's numbers was always a big task at such a moment. I was all fingers and thumbs. After several tries I managed it, but I was worried

because the numbers were too large and covered the Union Jack. These are the little things that nag the mind. What was Zatopek feeling? The thought sent cold flashes through me, and I was scared inside. My restlessness was much more than average because I was to race against the man on whom I had moulded my athletic career. Every athletic enthusiast was waiting eagerly to see who would win this struggle in an hour's time—Zatopek or Pirie? And what about Ken Norris? Ken Norris never gives up until he is absolutely spent. He was a second opponent as fearful as Zatopek.

Warming up for the race in the empty street round the Stadium was a relief for now I was running, and running is my life; not this waiting, lying down, sitting, pacing up and down—but running.

The sudden roars from the Stadium made the hairs on the back of my neck prickle, and I ran a short sprint thinking of the final struggle. I entered the arena through the competitors' tunnel. It was silent down there, a cold, dripping world which was the last shelter before the madness of the 25 laps of furious racing in the stadium.

A roar and the lights. Nerves and dry mouth. Fumble with the shoe laces—but habit sees you do this essential task perfectly. I only half-see friends as I try out the track. Whatever happens I will win. I can sense it and am determined. An official calls: "10,000-m competitors," and his voice booms much too loudly. The huge crowd falls silent with expectation as we line up. Zatopek is very cheery, but that is his form of gamesmanship to put his competitors off guard. We are away, and after some jockeying we settle down with Zatopek leading, myself second and Norris third. The race goes round and round and I feel fine, oblivious of the crowd and the lights. My eyes only see Zatopek's rhythmically pounding feet and the concrete edge of the track. The red cinders taste gritty as they spray up from Zatopek's spikes.

At the critical stage after three miles I harry Zatopek by running up to his side. He must speed up to maintain that lead which I am only interested in on the very last lap. Norris thinks I can't make the lead and takes the bait. He soars past us and leads—foolishly, for this means he will lose. I follow all the way as Norris thrashes his energy away fighting Zatopek for the lead.

Suddenly the bell rings, and I shoot forward into the lead, not too fast, but powerfully, waiting for the last 100 yds when I believe these two giants of racing will fight me for the right to break the tape. The spotlight shines on me and I can see shadows racing down the track.

They must be on my heels. My lungs are protesting, my muscles numbing, the roar of the crowd is a mere murmur to me. I only hear the roaring exhaustion in my head. Fists working like a boxer's and legs pounding, I race for the line, afraid to look, for they are behind. My imagination dare not guess where they are, and I accelerate against my body's pain. The tape snaps on my chest and I run easily to lose momentum. Senses flood back, washing out the terrible pains and exhaustion.

I have won.

After 24 laps of strong, easy running, I had covered the last lap in 57·2 s. Ken Norris ran marvellously and beat Emil into third place, but Ken never received the praise he ought to have had for this. It was probably his best-ever race.

When I reached my car outside the dressing-rooms I thought I had been summoned by the police for some offence. There was a paper under the windscreen wiper. It said, "If you can't do better than that you'll be fired," and was signed "Cyril Loftus" (my boss in L. G. Wilkinson).

In Manchester on the Saturday I beat Zatopek again, this time over 5,000 m. It was a cold October day. Ibbotson dropped out with ½ mile to go when he was on my shoulder, and allowed Zatopek to finish second, ahead of Frank Sando. This was my sixth and last race with Zatopek and it made the score three all.

In this event at Manchester Zatopek showed his magnificent character. In the middle of it he ran up to my shoulder, urging me on and calling, "Faster, faster—it is getting too slow!" It reminded me of the time he applied the same tactics to Jim Peters, in the Olympics marathon at Helsinki in 1952. After Jim had taken a big lead in the early stages Zatopek caught him up. Jim was going at it hammer-and-tongs, hoping to break Zatopek and the rest. Emil ran alongside him and asked Jim whether they were going fast enough. In the track races at Helsinki Zatopek was in a similar mood. The heat of the 5,000 m which he contested was already a foregone conclusion by the half-way mark. Zatopek ran wide in the track and signalled to the four others with him that they could take things easily for there was no danger from the other runners now far behind.

Anufriev, the Russian, was not to be influenced by Zatopek, and no matter how hard Zatopek remonstrated with him as they ran round, Anufriev was going faster than Zatopek thought necessary. Finally,

with a steady push, Zatopek sent Anufriev on his way to win while he, Zatopek, ran easily to the finish line chatting amicably with the others.

Shortly after the Manchester race I accepted an invitation to compete in a two-hour record attempt being promoted by the Road Runners Club at the Walton Athletic Club's ground. The farthest I had raced before was 10 miles, and the world record for two hours' running was more than twice that distance. But I was considering running in the marathon at the time.

In that race I did not suffer such terrible exhaustion as I did in 3-mile or 6-mile races. The only effect was that the legs became senseless after 10 miles. One could even carry on a normal conversation with the other runners. At the start I decided to attempt the 15-mile record and no further. This entailed running some few minutes over one and a quarter hours. When we started the pace was slow, on the advice of Jim Peters, so, by the time we reached 15 miles, I was quite a bit outside the record. By then Heywood, Lancaster and I, were leading and more or less by ourselves, so I decided to continue. Shortly before 20 miles Lancaster made a dash for the post and broke the world record at that distance. Heywood and I both broke the world record too. Heywood told me as we ran along not to chase Lancaster, for he was only going to run as far as 20 miles.

We were amazed when Lancaster, now 100 yds up on us, continued to run after passing the 20-mile post. Lancaster realized then that we would be after his blood and ran himself out over the last few laps until 2 hours were up. I ran as hard as I could after him but, with the gun for the final minute, I had only made up half the lead Lancaster had stolen on me. My legs were unwilling to stop running when the two hours were up. I was in agony from the calves down and, no matter whether I stood, sat, or walked, the pain was there gripping like a vice. I had broken the existing world records for two hours and for 20 miles running on my first marathon-like run but I did not have the pleasure of holding them, since Lancaster got there first.

After having a shower I drove to the SLH HQ at Coulsdon and watched the boys finish a cross-country match on Farthing Downs. They laughed at my stiff-legged walk, but I assured them it wasn't funny. This injury wasn't improved after several days when I regained the feeling in my legs, only to find that I couldn't run. I tried many days but it was impossible. My achilles tendons were very painful. Several times at the Croydon track I was able to do only one circuit

of the grass; I hobbled into the dressing-room and quietly resigned myself to the fact that my legs were done in for good.

I tried various treatments but all in vain. At the theatre under Charing Cross Station one evening I met a *Daily Express* reporter. He told me of a doctor he knew who could cure me. Of course I took this with a pinch of salt. Hadn't I been deluged with letters and phone calls from well-meaning people? One cure I had been offered was to lie in the Southend mud at low tide. However, since the *Express* man was very insistent, we fixed an appointment at Dr Cyriax's clinic at St Thomas's Hospital. Dr Cyriax and the physiotherapists worked feverishly on my legs. There were many times when I was prepared to give up. The treatment was agony. I had to lie on a bench while one of the girls massaged my achilles tendons with pressure. The pain made me grip the bench, and her fingers and my ankles were numb at the end of each session.

After four months of suffering, St Thomas's Hospital succeeded in curing my legs, and I was able to do a little running at the end of February, 1956. In March I was invited to race in the West Indies but turned this invitation down because SLH had asked me if I would be available for the defence of our National Cross-country title. With only two weeks' training before the event, I was a little dubious about starting. However, my mind was made up when another of our members filled my place on the West Indies tour. Without the two of us the team would be badly depleted, so I decided I must race as my club was more important. Our club was third in the race and I, after only a few days training, could do no better than 14th place. We were disappointed, for we were, on paper, the strongest team in the country. To compensate for the Seniors' failure, Roland Langridge won the Junior title, and his team mates backed him up so well that they retained the Junior Team Race. By winning in a terrific sprint finish Langridge turned the tables on Alan Cocking, the youths' champion of the previous year, and both showed outstanding form in their first year of Junior competition.

Running in the National brought on my leg trouble again, not so badly as before, but enough to prevent my running in the London to Brighton Relay in April. Once more SLH won this race in a new record and with three runners just recovering from flu or injuries. The club has never yet fielded its best team in the Relay, yet we have won the race four times despite this obvious handicap.

Over Easter, Shirley Hampton, Laurie Reed and I stayed at Withdean Stadium, Brighton. We trained twice a day by running on the fine track, lifting bar-bells, playing squash, swimming or walking on the downs. From that week-end my legs became stronger. This was due to help given me by Al Murray and Josh Joshua, both famous in weight-lifting and physical culture. Under their guidance my training was expanded in 1956 to include some special weight-training and gymnastics. On several days a week before doing my track running I carried out a series of weight exercises devised by Al and Josh. They took me between 30 and 40 strenuous minutes. Then I would run for an hour and a half. Another reason for my increased fitness was that I began training twice daily, during lunchtime and in the evening.

Some of these sessions I did at the Duke of York's Barracks with Chataway, Brasher and Hewson. This training was the reason for my good performances this season and not, as has been suggested, because I had a lay-off in the winter. I was twice as strong, thanks to daily weight-lifting and twice-a-day runs. I was also extremely happy because I was engaged to Shirley Hampton.

Another factor that gave me such fine performances through the year was that I took part in fewer races. From May to October I started in only 15 races as against 30 to 60 races in other years.

In this vintage year of 1956 I started off on a low note as I had done in all my track seasons. At the AAA's match at Oxford I ran only 4 min 14 s for the mile behind four other runners. There I met Laurie Reed again. He had hitch-hiked up from Devizes where he was stationed in the Army.

Next race was the British Games where I ran 1,500 m in 3 min 46·2 s in fourth place on the Saturday (equal to a mile in about 4 min 3 s). I felt tremendously strong and was running so well that I was confident of beating Iharos, the Hungarian world-record holder, on the Monday over 3,000 m. While everyone else was enjoying Whit Sunday, Shirley and I trained lightly and rested at home, building reserves for Monday's race. I was terrifically keyed up before the event and had a confident feeling. We lined up for the race, were under starter's orders, and 'Bang' we were off. I took two steps and a runner trod my shoe off. I was astounded. How had this happened? For a moment I didn't believe it. The other runners were racing round the bend and I was struggling to get my shoe back on.

It was impossible so I threw it away and in desperation ran after the others. They were 50 yds away and I had only one shoe on—what hope had I? By covering my first lap in 57 s I caught up the field and moved into a good position on Iharos's tail; but after another lap I had to stop with pain in my bare foot. There were boos from the crowd. The sprint round the first lap had removed all the skin from underneath my toes and blood was coming through the red cinders embedded in the raw flesh. The St John Ambulance men quickly washed and bandaged the wounds, and I had to watch Iharos win a fine race in just outside 8 min. I threw my other shoe down in my disappointment. Newspapers said I was grumbling about being defeated. Why, I never even raced!

The following week in Manchester I ran 3,000 m in very unfavourable windy conditions in 8 min 9·2 s. This race was one of my best because I led throughout against the strong wind and still beat Ibbotson on the sprint finish. A runner who follows, particularly on a windy day, is able to reserve his strength for the finish, whereas the leader tires himself terribly by fighting the wind.

Next step up was a mile in 4 min 4·6 s at Motspur Park. This was a last ½ mile in 1 min 57·2 s. A few days later I ran a solo 3 miles, again with the wind for company, recording a Surrey record of 13 min 42·2 s. Shortly after this, on the fine track at Walton-on-Thames, I ran another mile. Club mate Derek Clark raced in the ½ mile at the meeting and, directly afterwards, helped me by running the first half of the mile. Naturally, he was not able to run fast enough and we only did 2 min 2·0 s. Laurie Reed helped by breathing down my neck for this part of the race. The last half I ran solo and finished in 4 min 3·6 s. An hour later I ran in the 3 miles, to fill in for my brother, who was unable to reach the ground in time because his 1934 Baby Austin was uncooperative. This race gave me a ground and meeting record 13 min 45·9 s—altogether a very satisfactory double.

In a few weeks' time I had arranged to take a holiday in Bergen with my friends the Berentsens, whom I had met in 1953 in Norway. I went because Thorolf Rafto, the secretary of Nørrøna Club, Bergen, had written saying that a Russian team was to race there in invitation events at the Kronsminde Stadium. My sole intention was to have a race with Kuts, but I camouflaged this by telling the press that I was off on a fishing holiday. I never saw any fish, only the running track half-way up the mountain. There I trained twice a day and walked

up and down the mountain from the Berentsens' home between training spells. By the Sunday before the race, scheduled for Tuesday, I was trained absolutely to a standstill. So I only ran three-quarters of an hour on Monday and an hour and a quarter on the morning of the race, which I won in a new world-record time, with Kuts 25 yds back also beating the record. Time—13 min 36·8 s.

At the start of this race it was my intention to lead throughout, and this I did for a fast half-lap. Kuts and I accelerated as we both strove for the inside lane. I estimated that we would cover the first lap in under a minute—better than four-minute-mile speed—if we continued, so I allowed Kuts to lead. Even then we did the first lap in 60 s flat. Every straight I ran to Kuts's shoulder to hustle him along to a greater speed. At no time did I allow him to slacken to gather energy for a burst. We pelted along, Kuts leading and I moving to his shoulder continually for that 12½ laps bash. At last the bell rang, and I applied a searing sprint on the back straight of the last lap. I was astounded, for I left Kuts cold and was unpressed, running easily up the last 100 yds. I was unaware that it was a world record because the intermediate times were only called to Kuts in Russian by Russians or in Norwegian to the spectators. Had I really belted that last straight my time could have been 3 or 4 s better. I was elated and could not sleep a wink all night, for I had achieved one of my greatest ambitions—that of capturing the 5,000-m world record.

After Bergen we travelled to Trondheim, and it was there that I received the greatest compliment of my whole athletic career. Kuts refused to run against me. Still, this was not a holiday for me as Jerzy Chromik, the Pole and the world's greatest steeplechaser, was to race me. Chromik was later to be the victim of fever at the Olympics, where he ran in the heat against doctor's orders. That was a tragedy, for if ever there was a certainty for a gold medal Chromik was one in 1956. Jerzy was in fine form, and we had a chat with Walchak (javelin thrower) as interpreter. "I am going to beat you," said Jerzy with his usual twinkling smile. "OK," I said, "but if you do beat me this time, you won't next time." We both laughed. As we were to race on the second day of the meeting, Friday, we watched Kuts run 5,000 m solo in 14 min 18·0 s.

In Trondheim I met Martin Stokken, the only man to win an Olympics medal for both track-running and ski-ing. Also Hjalmar Anderson, the multi-gold-medal speed skater. I was told by my host,

Kjell Aarseth, that more gold medals 'live' in Trondheim than anywhere else in the world.

On the morning of the 3,000-m race Kjell took me to see the U-boat pens. They were like huge morgues, and I wondered as I looked at them how many young boys had gone to their graves through those doors. It was a depressing place, and I was pleased to get back to the green grass of the training track where Danielson, Olympics javelin champion to-be, was doing gymnastics training. I ran for an hour and a quarter and felt really wonderful and full of running, ready for the race that evening.

In the 3,000 m Chromik and I had a ding-dong struggle. The last 100 yds were decisive, with me gaining yard by yard to break the tape in a new world record. Jerzy was close behind in a new Polish record. My last 400 m was covered in 56·4 s. It was a most demanding but satisfying race with Jerzy, because it was a battle to the very finish. But because of a technicality that records were then accepted only for fifths of a second my time had to be forwarded as equalling the world record of 7 min 55·6 s, though the watches read 7 min 55·4 s, 7 min 55·5 s, 7 min 55·5 s, breaking by a tenth of a second the world record of 7 min 55·6 s held by Iharos of Hungary.

After that race I was again unable to sleep. The night at that northern latitude was very short. It was still light at midnight and dawn came at about 3.30 a.m. I lay thinking about the two races I had run that week. In my room I had two silver Viking ships, souvenirs from Hjalmar Anderson, and Kuts had given me his Russian sweater as a memento of the Bergen world record. I did not realize then that stupid people would write poison-pen letters to me for having that Russian pullover.

In the morning I spoke to Jack Crump in London by telephone and arranged to fly to Amsterdam the next day. I had to take the only flight out with the Russian team. From Trondheim town it is about 9 miles down the fjord to the airport. When we reached it we had to wait a long time for the plane to be made ready. The Russians enjoyed the same sort of skylarking as any British team. Yuri Lituyev, the 400-m hurdler, sat on a soap box. I crept up and kicked it from under him. Everyone thought it a fine joke. Yuri chased me and threw me to the ground in mock rage.

One man in the plane who spoke excellent English chatted to me for some time. I asked him where he lived, assuming that he was an

Englishman. I was surprised when he told me he was a Russian but that he had been educated in the US and England—in public schools. He was an officer aboard the Soviet warship *Ordzonikidze* when it visited Portsmouth. When I questioned him about Commander Crabbe he smiled. In conversation the Russian coaches asked me what my training schedules were. How had I beaten Kuts? Was there something special or different about my training? They were anxious to know because they considered Kuts's training to be the hardest possible. It was true that my training was different from Kuts's, but I answered, "I can race better because I run for the sheer love of it." None of them answered. They all smiled and nodded their heads.

At Oslo we said goodbye, and I trained at Bislet Stadium in the sunshine before catching the plane to Copenhagen. The DC6 Skymaster climbed over the fjord to 15,000 ft. Everything seemed normal. Refreshments were served by the smart and beautiful air hostesses. After 30 minutes' flying the plane was shaken violently by a terrible, rapid banging sound. I was scared. One passenger couldn't contain his fears and shouted in a panicky voice, "What is that noise, hostess?" The air hostess was calmly serving tea and did not answer for a minute. By this time the two port engines had stopped and the propellers were idling quietly in the feathered position. The hostess walked along the gangway and asked the man whether she could help him. He again asked in a much calmer voice, "What was that noise?" The hostess said, "What noise?" and promised she would go and ask the captain in a moment. The plane lost height gradually as we cruised lop-sidedly on the two starboard engines. The captain told us on the loudspeaker to fasten our safety belts and informed the passengers for Göteborg that he would have to fly direct to Copenhagen for an emergency landing. I asked an American next to me whether the plane was American. "These must be damned good engines," I said. I paused to see his reaction before adding, "They must be—otherwise those two still going couldn't manage such a huge plane by themselves."

The Skaggerak below came nearer and the minutes dragged by. The waves were slipping along menacingly close as if they were waiting to engulf the plane, whose shadow was huge on the water as we approached the runway at Kastrup. At last we touched down on the very edge of the welcoming concrete. As the plane rushed along the runway there were fire engines and crash crews waiting.

The plane slowed safely and a sigh went up from the passengers. We were safe, thanks to the wonderful job the crew had done. Terra firma was bliss after that trip.

Having to climb aboard the next plane to Amsterdam was frightening. I held tight as we took off, and counted the minutes to the landing. I was delayed by the Dutch police when they saw the Russian visa stamp on my passport. Why had I been to Russia? When I explained that my visit was for sport and not politics they allowed me in.

My friend Fritz de Ruyter had come to meet me, and he drove me to the Park Hotel where the rest of the British party, including my fiancée, Shirley Hampton, were to stay. My decision to race in Amsterdam was really prompted by my desire to meet Shirley again. On Sunday morning Fritz and I strolled in the fine park from which the hotel takes its name, and enjoyed a leisurely hour watching the ducks, swans and other beautiful birds in the ponds. The English party, with Jack Crump as team manager, had arrived when we returned to the hotel.

The Amsterdam Olympic Day is a varied programme, embracing nearly every sport from school-children's gymnastics to show-jumping, with athletics sprinkled oddly through the programme. Each member of our team had to eat at a different hour in relation to his race time. We all sat together and chatted as first one, then another, had his steak, salad, poached egg or pre-race fancy. These are rare moments of leisure when we all chat like so many washer-women about athletics and nothing in particular, interspersed with the odd funny story. I suppose it is the only part of the trip when the athletes are not mentally tied up in knots thinking about the contests.

When the meal was over we all had a quiet rest in our rooms and I meditated on the race. This is the time when an athlete feels all alone in the big world. Opponents assume tremendous stature. Any runner who denies having fears, nerves or some kind of indisposition is a bad athlete, or a liar. Great performances are built up not only on hard work but also by great mental concentration at the time of the race. I experience something akin to that cold feeling in the middle of the back on a dark night when you are sure there is a ghost chasing you. This makes me run like a demon. Needless to say this attitude has to be developed by the athlete himself, and for my part I must say that whenever I train I simulate this fear of the unknown, especially when exhaustion is taking over the body.

On this particular afternoon in Amsterdam I was as nervy as usual. My main opponent was Richtenhein of East Germany, who later finished second in the Olympic 1,500 m. Even then, in July, he had some great performances behind him. Roger Dunkley was my team mate, and I told him that I hoped to take the lead and to race as fast as possible the whole way. He was to follow close on my heels. When we started Richtenhein took the lead, and Roger and I had to go as fast as we could to keep up! But that was admirably suited to my ability, for I sprinted past the tiring German on the last lap and won in a time of 3 min 43·8 s, equalling Slykhuis's Dutch record. It is an interesting fact that when Slykhuis ran this time a few years earlier it was the world's third fastest time. Now it did not rank in the world's top twenty!

Roger Dunkley, Shirley and I, stayed overnight in Amsterdam and took a trip round the canals by launch. We saw the big ships out in the deep-water docks and as we returned in the narrow canals we passed by the house of Van Gogh.

Home again I decided, on Emil Zatopek's suggestion, to make an attempt on his 10,000-m record. It was staged at a mid-week meeting at Croydon Sports Arena. Six days before the race, groundsmen had decided to lay fresh ash on the inside lane of the track. This ruined the surface for, as Derek Johnson found in the Brockman Trophy, the track was like sand. Two days before the meeting I raked eight barrowloads of this loose ash from the inside lane. I made the track pretty good again but strained a muscle in my left leg with the unusual exercise. On the day of the race there was a strong wind blowing. (The parks department had not planted any wind-break.) Chris Suddaby, the Oxford Blue, was my strongest opponent. We set off fast and the first 3 miles were 13 min 47·8 s, a ground record. This was just right for the record I hoped to achieve and was in fact 15 s slower than the first half of the Olympic 10,000-m run was to be four months later. But bad weather and lack of opposition prevented my maintaining a fast pace beyond 3 miles. Norris McWhirter wrote of this race, "Pirie's first half was suicidal." This was nonsense.

The leg muscle I had strained working on the track became stiff, and while I was training next day it 'pulled' and I had to have an injection to limit the internal bleeding. After this I had to relax from strenuous competition for nearly a month and consequently missed the AAA Championships. In this period I was able to have my smallpox

and yellow-fever vaccinations necessary for the Olympics trip to Australia. I trained very hard after the muscle responded to further treatment by Dr Cyriax. I concentrated on weights to improve myself beyond the standard I had already achieved. One day at the Duke of York's Barracks we had some light relief during training. Comedian Max Bygraves appeared, to make a film for TV. In the script, he had escaped from prison and had run on to the White City track to pass me during one of my races. He had us in fits with his capers.

My first race after the injury was a mile at Croydon. Club mate Martin Walmsley agreed to help me to attempt a fast time. We trained together a week before the race and on the day of the meeting were very upset, for the weather turned nasty with a blustery wind and rain showers. Martin's comment was, "We won't bother about a fast time; it will be impossible in these conditions." I told him to forget the weather and to run as we had planned. Martin covered the first ½ mile in just over 2 min, and I was alone to complete the last two gruelling laps. I ran well, and with the wind and rain lashing my body I came home in a personal best time of 4 min 2·2 s.

At August Bank Holiday I took a trip to Freiburg to train with Gerschler. There I heard the commentary on Derek Ibbotson's tremendous first under-four-minute mile.

Back home again I ran at Croydon track, covering 2 miles solo in 8 min 42·6 s. The Great Britain *v.* Russia match was looming up, and I extended my training for the longer distance. My form was the best I had ever enjoyed. Kuts was coming to race the 10,000 m and he was reported to be thinking in terms of records. So was I. But we were disappointed.

Just before the Great Britain *v.* Russia match the Soviet athlete Nina Ponomorova was caught shop-lifting hats in a large London store. It may have been undiplomatic of the store concerned to press proceedings against her. If the store directors had been to Russia they would have realized why a Russian girl could not resist the wonderful bright wares of the capitalist world. However, Konstantin Krupin, the Russian manager, issued a statement as follows: "As is well known, a dirty provocation has taken place in London against one of the members of the Soviet Athletics Team, Nina Ponomorova, Olympics and European Champion and Merited Master of Sport of the USSR. For the feeling of solidarity and as a sign of protest against this dirty provocation framed against Nina, the Soviet Athletic

Delegation refuses to take part in this match and is returning to the USSR."

This was intended to give the impression that all the Russian athletes refused to compete. But from my contacts with them I found they were very much in favour of racing. But they had to obey orders from Moscow. British officials had encouraged a high-handed line from the Russians. Every demand they had made was met with abject humility. In London the Russians demanded metric races, the steeplechase was wrong, and so on. They got their way. In Moscow, too, the Russians laid down their conditions for competitions which the British officials meekly accepted instead of telling the Russians to do things our way or go to hell.

After the farce and fiasco of this cancelled meeting the Achilles Club kindly invited me to race in Malmö with them. This brought me a new world record over 3,000 m and the satisfaction of beating three world-record holders of that time, Rozsavolgyi, who was second, Iharos, who was third, and Tabori, who was fourth. As I broke the tape my body was pounding with exhaustion. I had to jog on to recover my senses. Barclay Palmer, the huge shot-putter, rushed up and picked me up bodily, and I gasped, "For goodness sake, let me run." I felt sorry for Iharos, who had run 8 min 5·8 s for a distant third place and for Tabori who was fourth in 8 min 16·8 s. It was awful to see two such fine athletes so demoralized. There is always this element of tragedy when a great athlete does not win. Only a champion knows how deeply defeat is felt. I have never beaten a world-record holder without feeling a pang as if what I had done was unfair.

I believe this race was the best I ever ran—3,000 m in 7 min 52·8 s with the last lap under 55 s. Please note that this meant 2 miles in 8 min 26 s, some 6 s superior to the existing 2-mile world record.

I wonder what would have been the outcome if Kuts and I had raced that week-end in London. As it was, the balance swung in Kuts's favour in September. On his return to Moscow he ran a record 10,000 m in a truly fabulous 28 min 30·8 s, 10 s faster than Iharos had just achieved and 24 s faster than Zatopek's best. This gave Kuts the necessary confidence which he lacked for the Olympics. Only a month before, when he ran 10,000 m in 28 min 57 s, he was utterly dejected and said, "I am not fast enough to win anything at the Olympics."

After the Malmö racing we had a fabulous dinner in the old castle.

In that gathering were the world-record holders for every distance from 800 m to 10,000 m. They were: R. Moens, 800 m (1 min 45·7 s); Rozsavolgyi, 1,000 m (2 min 19·0 s); L. Tabori and S. Iharos, 1,500 m (3 min 40·8 s); Roszavolgyi, 2,000 m (5 min 2·2 s); G. Pirie, 3,000 m (7 min 52·8 s); G. Pirie, 5,000 m (13 min 36·8 s); and S. Iharos, 10,000 m (28 min 40·6 s).

We met Brian Hewson and several other English athletes at Copenhagen the next day. Since I was still fatigued from the world record, I ran in the 1,500 m with Hewson and Gunnar Nielson and managed to scrape home by inches from Hewson in the modest time of 3 min 49·2 s. This meant that I had beaten four four-minute milers in three days, but, alas, I myself never seemed destined to achieve the magic figures.

On returning to England I was persuaded to race in the *Daily Express* Meeting on September 12. This was to be my third clash with Richtenhein, and, with Chataway thrown in for good measure, the race showed great promise. The day of the meeting I stayed at Lancaster Court Hotel and drove to the White City with Derek Ibbotson. We were caught in a traffic jam at Shepherd's Bush, and I had a scrape with another anxious driver. I was shaking when we reached the road circling the stadium. I intended parking as usual outside the dressing-room but all the space was filled. Only 15 minutes to race time!

When the policeman signalled me on I was so surprised that I didn't apply the brakes until the front wheel was on his foot. He showed great presence of mind, for, after extracting his foot, he said, "You ought to be more careful, sir. Now, just move along please." Ibbotson jumped out of the car, taking my bag, while I drove off in a panic, eventually finding a parking spot ½ mile away. I abandoned the car and ran like mad for the stadium, rushed inside, grabbed my number, changed and went straight out to the track in time for the start.

We were half-way through the 3¾-lap race before I knew what was happening. I had allowed myself to be boxed in behind Alan Gordon and Chataway. The German Richtenhein was drawing away. I was finally able to make my running freely when Chataway veered into the second lane down the final back straight. Richtenhein was 10 yds up, and I had to give my final sprint immediately to catch him. He beat me in the home straight by 4 yds. Chataway and Gordon finished 3 s later.

After that hectic hour I walked back to the dressing room and lay down to gather my shattered nerves. I stared at the ceiling wondering why everything happened to me. I had broken bones, been in crashes as a passenger in other people's cars and had my shoe torn off. It always happened to ME. This seemed grossly unfair at the time, but that is the sort of misery that an athlete is often prey to on great occasions. Truthfully I must have been very lucky to survive so many setbacks.

Chapter 17

MARRIAGE AND AUSTRALIA

Shirley and I spent our honeymoon on the Isle of Wight after a Caxton Hall wedding ceremony. Rootes kindly lent me a new model Hillman Minx convertible. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh had used this car in Scotland the week before, and Mike Hawthorn had road-tested it that same week-end.

As we left after the reception the car was plastered with lipstick, adorned with tin cans and filled with confetti. At Green Park the hardware was jettisoned and we drove out of London. Naturally we stopped at the Tourist Trophy Garage at Farnham. Mike Hawthorn and his mother were there, and Mike helped us clean off the lipstick with white spirits. But I caught him busily writing more slogans of his own on the car. He had a guilty expression like a small boy caught red-handed.

We toured the Isle of Wight in the superb Hillman Minx and visited my grandfather. The first leaves of Autumn were falling as we drove happily back to London. Paul Fox invited me to appear on Television Sportsview. Several prominent figures in British athletics said a word or two of flannel about me. Jack Crump presented me ceremonially with a small cheque for about £3, a gift from a few well-wishers in the athletic world. I thanked everyone for being so kind.

At London Airport I kissed my mother and Shirley, and said goodbye to a host of friends who had come to see me off to Melbourne for the Games. It was only when I was on the plane that I realized that I might never see my family or these friends, or even England, again, and a lump came into my throat and my eyes became misty. We were soon, it seemed, at Rome, and after a brief stop—long enough to send

cards to loved ones and friends in England—we took off on the next stage. Over the Mediterranean there were thunderstorms, and the pilot swung the plane expertly between towering thunderheads. The pitch darkness was broken at regular intervals by flashes of lightning that connected the clouds for an instant with the dark sea miles below. It reminded me of the bombing in London when I was a boy.

I dozed off and awoke as we neared Cairo. The eastern sky was shot with the red rays of dawn. It was just after 6 a.m. and clear daylight as we were served breakfast by Arabs dressed in long, dirty, flowing gowns. Eating was a competition with the flies, and the heat was oppressive despite the early hour. Military men were much in evidence at the Airport. Tension between Britain and Egypt was acute. Several passengers were warned not to take pictures of the buildings. They waited until they were climbing up the steps into the plane before turning and taking snaps. We settled in our seats and the stewardess gave us cool flannels soaked in eau de Cologne. We passed over Port Said and had a perfect view of the Suez Canal in its last weeks under British control. Below, my elder brother, Ian, was working, ignorant of the fact that I was flying overhead. A few weeks later he lost all his belongings and was jailed because he was British.

From Port Said the wastes of the desert seemed endless. We crossed the southern extremity of the Persian Gulf; then the mountains of Persia and eventually Afghanistan and Pakistan loomed up gauntly. I fell asleep again. When the door of the cabin was opened at Karachi the hot, heavy night air engulfed us. We had to remove our jackets when we sat in the restaurant sipping cold drinks under the lazily turning fans. I watched a lizard on the wall. It was perfectly camouflaged on the grey plaster and clung motionless, waiting for flies to settle nearby. When it moved it darted like an arrow. I went for a walk and looked at souvenir shops selling wooden carvings of animals, silken slippers, jewellery, ivory elephants, Buddhas and Gurkhas' knives. I bought a knife with a long curved blade set in a strong leather scabbard, and sent more coloured postcards to friends around the world.

By this stage of the journey the stomach and senses had become confused. It was no use saying "In England it is teatime", or "In Australia it's breakfast time." One merely judged the hour by the meals and refreshments which were served in quick succession to

keep up with the fleeting hours, caused by the plane's racing against the sun. Cornflakes were quite unwelcome when I was dropping off to sleep, but then even sleep lost its significance. As we roared on our way across the Indian continent in the darkness I was wide awake and read magazines. After the Calcutta stop I fell asleep during most of the daylight hours until we landed at Bangkok. The heat there was the most searing of the whole journey. Several students joined the plane. They were going to study in Australia under the Colombo plan. Their families wished them luck and loaded them with garlands of exotic flowers. In a kiosk selling Siamese silver I bought a fine bracelet for my wife and a lovely tiepin.

I believe every passenger says his prayers, as I do, when taking off. The plane roared down the runway and off we flew to Singapore. The drive to Raffles Hotel from Singapore Airport was through a very interesting section of town. On the one side there were junks and assorted boats of all shapes and sizes lining the waterfront. On the opposite side of the road was a kind of jungle with huts hidden among the bamboos. Chickens, dogs, cows and children, mixed freely in these encampments. It was a story-book setting.

At the hotel I took a lukewarm shower and lay on my bed in the air-conditioned room. The plane's engines still drummed in my head. After a rest I decided to try to find Dr Alan Grieve, a South London Harrier sprinter who was living in town. Armed with his address I took a rickshaw. The boy assured me he knew the address and took me along side streets. I was scared to be alone in the squalid areas we passed through. We went on and on, the buildings gradually becoming more dilapidated. I stopped the rickshaw at the docks and asked some sailors if they knew the address I was seeking. Yes, they did, and it was in the opposite direction. After some pointed words with the coolie I took a taxi. The Chinese driver nodded when I showed him the address. After driving some time I thought his knowledge was no better than the rickshaw boy's but, as I was about to argue with him, we drew up at a house in a wooded setting. My friend was out and I returned to Raffles Hotel three hours after I had left.

The rest of the flight to Sydney was blurred by sleep. I have fleeting memories of a delay at Djakarta, Indonesia, with engine trouble; a huge volcano rearing up to our level in the East Indies; scorching heat at Darwin; sunrise over Australia; and at last Sydney. Several athletic

enthusiasts met me there, and we went to one of the famous beaches where we chatted and laughed in the warm sun.

The plane to Melbourne was cold, and I was thankful to be greeted on arrival by a lovely shower of rain. I was the first sportsman to arrive for the Olympic Games. John Douglas took me to his home in Glen Iris, where I slept from Monday evening till Wednesday midday. It took a whole week for me to recover completely from the fatigue of that flight and for the roar of the plane engines to leave my head.

I started training again and was immediately aware that my condition had deteriorated badly and my form was bad. Added to this, Melbourne experienced the worst spring weather on record. Many days I trained in a raincoat as well as two tracksuits. When Ken Wood arrived I moved to Melbourne University, sharing a room with him. The cafeteria in the University was really great, and cheap too. The manageress was a charming woman from my home county, Yorkshire, so naturally the food was first-class.

The track at the University had been laid at great expense, but for some strange reason it was badly done, for it poked up in the air at one side and consequently was very susceptible to wind. Why, oh why, are so many arenas raised instead of being sunk? I would venture to guess that the people responsible don't bother enough about planning ahead.

Australians are so vigorous that it was inspiring to mix with them. When the new Olympic cycle track was opened the crowd celebrated by breaking the turnstiles. This was because they came directly from the hotel along the road which claims to have the longest bar in the world. I visited that 'shrine' one lunch hour, and the bar certainly was enormous. It weaved back and forth through the length of the building. All the fittings were plastic or of waterproof materials. There were no seats except in the private bar. Drinking hours were like a Rugby scrum, and beer was served from pressure hoses. After the bodies were thrown out the whole room was hosed down. I sat in a pool of cleaning water on the chairs in the private bar when I had lunch there after training in Olympic Park.

Hec Hogan, the Australian sprinter who won third medal in the Games 100 m, told me he listened to the starter at every meeting and decided what was the starter's average pause between the get-set command and the firing of the pistol. When Hec's turn came to race he counted off the pause to himself and then started. Nine times out of

ten, Hec said, he managed to get a great start, but one not too obviously a 'flyer!'

When I trained at Melbourne I had the company of a Russian who took note of my training times. I got to know him and was often able to check my times through his notes. On one occasion his time was well out, and I indicated jokingly that his watch was no good. Mind you, it was a huge Omega-type watch, much better than mine. Every time I saw him after that I pulled his leg about getting a new watch.

The University track was so hard that our feet became badly blistered. When the weather improved one had to put up with the dry hot winds blowing from Central Australia. To make matters worse, the Athletics Authorities put a ban on all racing in Melbourne before the Games. This was utter nonsense. I flew to Sydney to race. As there is no cinder track in Sydney we had to negotiate the rubbish dump at Moore Park for competitions. My lack of form there was sufficient to jolt me. This stay in Sydney saved me from being a failure at the Games and allowed me to regain my form. Those people who say I was a failure at Melbourne are insulting Kuts, for he won on his merits and I ran tremendously there as well.

Viv Chalwin and his wife looked after Frank Sando and me so well at Sydney that we were able to do some fine training. Frank and I visited the Sydney Sports Ground twice a day and I trained very hard each time. Thanks to Chalwin and the really first-class ground I became fit. Frank and I returned to Melbourne the day before the British team arrived. We spent the rest of our time training, eating and sleeping. A week before the Games I ran at Bendigo, doing 2 miles in 8 min 51·2 s. The Hungarians arrived during these last days. Rozsavoglyi and Tabori cried on my shoulder when I met them. They were so exhausted that they and the other Hungarians spent their time sleeping till the Games and doing only light training. Iharos never even arrived. That was a tragedy, for I believe that he could have beaten Kuts.

The day before the opening ceremony Jack Crump lent me the team's Holden car to meet Shirley, who was disembarking from the liner Arcadia after the long voyage from England. Her cabin mate, Elaine Boake, was a charming girl who offered to put Shirley up, as her house was at Kooyong, not far from the Olympic venues. I drove Shirley to my uncle's house, where they made a great fuss of

her during her first days in Australia. I was relieved that Shirley had arrived safely at last. Now I was much happier and looking forward to the races.

On the opening day those of us who had to compete next day watched all the teams assembling in their various national dress. The camp was deserted and I jogged round the training track for the last time before the competitions. When I returned to our quarters I missed the steps and scraped my shin from top to bottom on the concrete, leaving a white line of flesh. No one was about so I was able to keep this secret. I slept lightly that night and, next day, felt very good for the race. I was confident, but I had seen Kuts doing phenomenal training. All the same I looked forward to racing the 10,000 m. I would give everything I had. It was going to be a race of races, and it was certain that one of us would win while the other would be run off his feet.

We had a false start, and an official warned me as he thought I was responsible. Had I taken a second false start I would have been disqualified, so the proper start saw me left a little. I didn't take any chances. Kuts was away into the lead, and I moved to his shoulder. After two laps of strong running the Australians came up and interfered with Kuts by cutting in and touching his heels. Kuts responded with a fantastic spurt that took the two of us away from the mob of runners in half a lap. From then on I clung to Kuts's heels and we did not see the others again. We pounded round, lap after lap. Kuts ran terrific lung-searing dashes but slowed up dangerously between, causing me to stumble on occasions. He pulled up so suddenly that I was not able to avoid clipping his heels. He was deliberately doing this fast-slow to put me off my rhythm. I was so tired that I couldn't lead to stop him doing it. He tried desperately to shake me off, sometimes running in the third lane. Most of the race we ran a lane wide because the track was in a terrible condition. It was like sand. Taking into account the extra distance we were covering we were racing at a fantastic pace. We must have passed a genuine 3 miles in 13 min 25 s. We passed 4 and 5 miles in world records, 18 min 11 s, and 23 min respectively.

I thought that with four laps to go I had passed the danger point and that it was only to be a matter of covering this last short distance before the gold medal was mine. This was not taking Kuts's strength into account. He put in another phenomenal burst after forcing me

to take the lead momentarily. I broke with only 3½ laps left and Kuts's flagging spirit was renewed. He struggled on and won by a small margin, for the other runners were catching him hand over fist. I staggered the last three laps at about walking pace. I was utterly exhausted, like a punch-drunk boxer, but I was still determined to cross the finishing line. When I did so I soon recovered my senses and walked to Kuts to congratulate him on his guts.

The Russians told me after the Games that if I had been able to resist that final burst that broke me Kuts himself would have dropped out, such was his exhaustion. This is an example of the very small margin there is between winning and losing such terrible battles. After the race I was satisfied that I had given the very last ounce of my ability. The 5,000 m was just ahead, and this race had given me a polishing up for another good performance over the shorter race.

Roger Bannister gave me two sleeping tablets for the night after the 10,000 m. This was to combat my inability to sleep after such tremendous efforts. I decided to take half the dose because I was frightened of any kind of interference with the body's natural workings. I slept from Friday evening until Sunday teatime. On the Monday I still felt a little drowsy. I won my heat, running with a good easy tempo and tying with my old friend Mugosa of Yugoslavia. I watched the other heats from the crowd, and the Australians were cheering like mad when Albert Thomas and Alan Lawrence ran hard to win their heats in fast times. A policeman turned to me and said, "Wasn't that a beauty?"

There were some amusing incidents when the Australians gave out some extraordinary announcements. For instance, although we were at the Olympic Games, the loud speakers announced that so-and-so had made a new Victorian State record in such-and-such an event. When she was congratulated on breaking the Victorian shot-put record, the American girl Earlene Brown said, "Gee, I am sorry—I didn't mean to."

The two days before the 5,000 m final were packed with events, and it was difficult to concentrate, but I managed, whereas some of the British team jeopardized their chances by staying out late and enjoying themselves in a way which would hardly have been approved by the thousands of loyal supporters who had given willingly towards sending the team to Australia. The day of the 5,000 m race passed slowly. I carried out my usual pre-race activities, jogging in the morning

after breakfast, which helps to relax muscles and nerves. I read, tried to sleep and was generally very restless, looking at my watch every ten minutes or so. I imagine Kuts and my other opponents were like caged lions too.

The meals were first-class and the catering was the finest I have experienced at any athletic gathering, but I had to be content with a light meal of a small, well-done steak, a little salad and two small boiled potatoes, followed by bread and honey and two cups of well-sugared tea. All this was tucked away with $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to go before the race. Then back to the billet for a rest.

Ibbotson came into the room and asked about the race. I did not consider he was a threat to Kuts as he is a miler, not a 3-miler. I did not want to talk about the race, so I told him to watch Chataway. Apparently Ibbotson's idea was that we three Englishmen should use tactics to box Kuts in. I considered this was an extraordinary suggestion, particularly as Kuts was obviously in superior form. He would dictate the race, and all we could hope to do was to try and keep up.

We were driven the 10 miles to the Stadium, arriving with a little less than two hours left to the race. I lay in the teams' room under the Stadium reading until three quarters of an hour before the start, when I went outside and jogged round in the warming-up enclosure. One had to be very careful not to twist ankles on the rough surface. It was much too small for the number of competitors. The time passed quickly as I jogged, exercised and sprinted in the 'cage'. Every minute of the warm-up I spent in mental concentration. In the last ten minutes I ran into the Stadium and collected my light-weight Adidas racing shoes with four steel spikes in the forepart of the sole.

At the start of the race I felt relaxed and strong. Kuts led me, and we circled the track in this fashion for 7 laps except for a brief period when Tabori led. My only mistake was in allowing Kuts to take the first mile too slowly, for he started to apply the pressure in the second mile. Had I forced him to run faster at the start, his second mile would have been more relaxed and in my favour. After the 10,000 m I had decided to allow Kuts to change speed. I would catch him as he slowed between bursts. This was sensible except that on his third powerful run down the back straight Chataway overtook Ibbotson and myself. I had to concentrate on Chataway and Ibbotson around the next bend. As we came into the home straight I was shocked

to see that Chataway had allowed Kuts to break away. Kuts had opened up a 10 yds gap! That was the end of the race, for although I passed Chataway and Ibbotson at speed, and Ibbotson and I made a determined effort to recatch Kuts, it was of no avail, for as soon as we were on his heels he set off on another sprint. No one could give Kuts 10 yds without paying for it. Had we stayed in contact at that critical stage it might have been different. As it was, Kuts now sped away with renewed spirit, for the finish was close and no one was at his heels. He ran phenomenally to record the same time he had achieved in finishing second to my world record in Bergen. I believe that Kuts would have run a new world record but for the atrocious state of the track.

After Kuts finished everyone turned to see Ibbotson lead me into the home straight 100 yds after Vladimir gave his victory salute. We sprinted and I passed Derek 40 yds out to win second medal by 20 yds.

In the victory ceremony 15 minutes later, Kuts did not know which way to face for the flag-raising. He was still in a stupor. I was happy to finish second after the punishment I received in the 10,000 m. The British press had nailed up my coffin after that first epic race!

Although the electric tension had gone and my sweat and toil was over, my training still went on. We used to sit a long time chatting over a cup of tea after meals. Derek Johnson said a really true thing about the team. "One half sits in the stands praying that the other half won't win." This, he explained, was because each one had his life story at the publishers waiting for the gold medals. Chataway and Bannister must have glanced at each other as Brasher won his gold medal. He was the man who had paced them, and he hurdled over their heads to fame. Brasher had helped Bannister to the four-minute mile, and both Chataway and Bannister had used Brasher as a 'chopping block' in training.

The steeplechase was a tragedy for Poland for Jerzy Chromik, the world-record holder, was ill in Melbourne. Rozsnyoi, of Hungary, though still suffering after the Hungarian revolution, finished third.

In the terrific heat of the last day of the Games I drove around the Marathon course on my scooter. How those fellows ran 26 miles in such conditions I couldn't understand. Mimoun ran as if he were unaware of the burning sun, while the others wilted like so many

flowers. Zatopek ran in sixth place, but we all knew that his presence at the Games as a competitor was more by force than by choice. He had wanted to retire before then.

After the Games everybody packed and disappeared to Sydney, while Shirley and I stayed with the Douglas family until Christmas. In those weeks we visited Adelaide for an athletic meeting where I ran a South Australian 1,500-m record of 3 min 45·6 s. In Adelaide we were driven round in a hair-raising fashion; 60 m.p.h. seemed to be the minimum speed for our motor-racing host. He took us to the aerodrome in the evening for our return flight to Melbourne and lost his way. We passed through lines of blue and red lights, pulling up sharply behind an aeroplane parked on the runway. Back at Melbourne I ran against the world 6-mile record holder, Dave Stephens, and did an Australian 2-mile record on a sandy grass track, followed by a ½ mile in 1 min 53·6 s in the medley relay.

Christmas in Australia was strange to us because of the hot weather. The Douglas family celebrated in much the same way as any English family, except that we played cricket and miniature tennis in the garden in shorts. For the festivities a gallon of Australian port cost only 7s. 6d., and it was real good stuff. If people in England say Australian wines are not as good as European ones, it must be because they—the wines—don't travel well. I recommend English people to travel themselves and enjoy these wonderful wines in their native setting with sunshine.

On Boxing Day we drove to Frankston, a beach resort 20 miles down the bay from Melbourne. There we ran on an oval of excellent grass surrounded by gum trees. In the junior ½ mile handicap a hawk-faced boy ran a lively race to finish fourth from scratch. His time was 1 min 54 s, an Australian junior record. The officials did not announce this achievement and the boy's coach, Percy Cerutty, was going to murder the lot of them for refusing to announce the record. The boy was very quiet and took it all calmly as Cerutty danced about tearing his hair. The boy's name was Herb Elliott.

At the New Year, we packed our bags—Shirley of course had ten to my three or four—and took them to Melbourne station. The cheerful railway employees who weighed them told us not to send them by passenger train because it would cost £15. They advised us, quite against the railway rules of course, to take the bags to a freight depot outside town, and even helped us load up the car again. They

Trying to improve the track at Netherne.

On our self-prepared track Laurie Reed and myself train, with Alfred Churchill timing us.

Keeping up with Jerzy Chromik in the 3,000 metres in June, 1956. I passed him and went on to win in the world record time of 7 min. 55·5 secs.

refused a tip. At the freight depot we had further help in every direction and the luggage cost £1 10. 0. This time we forced a drink on the railwayman, a Latvian. This was typical of Australians and our experiences in Australia. Everyone was so friendly and helpful.

The scooter took the two of us and 70 lb of gear without a murmur. Most people we spoke to laughed at our idea of driving to Sydney in four days on a motor scooter. We did it in 2½ days though we crashed twice. Our route took us through wonderful scenery. There were sandy beaches, lakes, mountains and miles of forests. One section of the road was really shocking, all sand, stones and potholes. That was where we had our accidents. On the second occasion a car following us pulled up barely 2 ft behind the spot where we fell on the gravel. A travelling circus coming from Sydney stopped and gave us first-aid. My right leg was trapped under the scooter, which gouged a hole in the ankle. We couldn't staunch the bleeding so we continued on the journey with blood oozing out of the wound to form a pool on the footrest. We had both suffered bad gravel rashes on hands, elbows and legs as well.

One evening we passed through a bush fire. The flames crackled on the verge of the road while the red glow of other fires flickered through the trees on all sides. At Wollongong the sky was blackened by the pall of smoke which drifted from the fires out over the Tasman Sea to the horizon.

In Sydney there was a heatwave, and we were thankful to cross the Harbour Bridge and reach Viv Chalwin's home. For two days the Chalwins bathed the wounds on our arms and legs, and, thanks to their care, we were fairly well patched up in time to board the boat for New Zealand.

* * *

Australia has five stars on her flag and you might imagine that five is also the number of Australia's athletic stars, judging by the coverage Australian athletes have from the press. Yet in that vast sunny country there are many champions and thousands of others who have tremendous potential.

When Franz Stampfl went down-under he said he could make a four-minute miler out of any man in the street. Australians only stay on the street for the shortest possible time. When not working they are surfing, swimming, playing football or tennis, or just lazing in the

sun. The number of people who take part in athletics is small as yet, but, judging from the tall, bronzed youngsters I have seen in Australia, I should say that if the talent is properly encouraged it could beat the world in the next decade.

As is customary in the sporting world the greatest handicap of the athlete is the old fogeys who govern sport. If you consider British sports bodies to be backward you haven't seen anything. In Australia they are still at the turn of the last century. A man like Percy Cerutty is tied hand and foot although he could take the youth of Australia and transform them into sports giants capable of beating the Russians and the Americans in every sphere. Cerutty's athletic training book is the finest ever published, for it reveals the very heart of success. His ideas on diet and exercise are tremendous and ought to be studied by the grey-faced, fat, civilized people of this world, who would rather face a coffin than take some advice.

Australia has produced some fantastic champions in the last ten years but I will concentrate on the few I know. I believe John Landy owed his success to Cerutty, but because John did not go the whole hog with Cerutty he lost his greatest races. I am as convinced of this as Cerutty is. I met Landy in 1952 when he failed to qualify in my heat of the 5,000 m at the Helsinki Olympics. John and I swapped our vests as mementoes. At Helsinki Landy was full of enthusiasm and looked forward to the highest success as an athlete. He achieved his ambition through determination and hard work, but at the pinnacle of his career he failed because he altered his attitude. In 1956 at Melbourne he had changed so completely from 1952 that I would not have recognized him but for his physical features. He now seemed satisfied and lacking in drive and enthusiasm. He gave the impression of being cynical about athletics and about other athletes. It was not a surprise to me to hear that he had given up athletics. I think he faded out because he concentrated on the mile too much. If he had run every distance he would have continued to enjoy his athletics for many years and realized his greater potential over the longer distances.

Landy's greatest success was when he paced himself to that great 3 min 57·9 s world-record mile in Turku in 1954. Before that he had run some remarkable races, but he was always handicapped by the lack of facilities and proper encouragement in Australia. As soon as he had facilities which we in Europe take for granted, but which were luxuries to him, such as excellent cinder tracks, he ran his solo record.

Landy was serious minded, but many Aussies seem to take life very light-heartedly and are fond of harum-scarum escapades.

Dave Stephens was rather a 'case.' He had a job delivering milk through the night and he did his training in between the horse and cart and the houses. He took a sleeping bag with him and dossed down anywhere he could. It is not generally appreciated how great a runner Stephens was. He ran a world 6-mile record alone at Melbourne and later beat the famous Hungarians Iharos and Tabori. At the time of the Olympics he was suffering from hepatitis, and from being a hope for a gold medal he was reduced to a jogging milkman. That was his tragedy, for he never really recovered his confidence after that Olympics even though his ability was as great as ever. After the Games Stephens tortured me with a gruelling pace for 1½ miles of a 2-mile race. When I moved up to help make the pace in the most difficult part of that race Dave dropped out. Had he continued he would have beaten me and the Australian 2-mile mark record which I set up in finishing alone. Only the champion in his own remote world can appreciate the stress and strain which defeated Dave Stephens.

Albert Thomas, the mighty midget from Sydney; Alan Lawrence, the only man to beat Kuts in the Olympics; and Dave Power, the Empire's champion veteran, all exemplify the Australian's determination, sportsmanship and good humour. They started their athletics together and each has gone a long way to reach the top.

Thomas's world records for 2 and 3 miles and his four-minute miling are, of course, legendary. So are Dave Power's Empire 6-mile and marathon wins, and his great running in the Rome Olympics; but Alan Lawrence is rather the unknown master who taught Albert Thomas the essentials of running in the parks of Sydney. Lawrence took third place in that terrific 10,000 m in the Melbourne Olympics when Kuts ran me out of the race. Lawrence then beat Kuts in the 5,000 m heat but pulled a muscle and could not contest the final.

Lawrence was invited to race in Moscow as a result of his Olympics triumph. He had to fight the fuddy-duddy officials of his country who did their best to prevent his racing in the USSR. They warned him against being involved with the Communists. All they achieved was to persuade Lawrence to quit Australia and take a scholarship in Houston, Texas, where he has run happily ever since and achieved notable successes.

Lawrence is not the only case of an athlete leaving Australia because of his dissatisfaction. Many Aussie boys are now in the States despite threats and warnings from the Australian Sports Association that they would be banned in Australia.

Albert Thomas still lives in Australia but he saw the shortcomings of his home country's facilities and organization when he visited Europe for the first time in 1958. Because he publicly stated that Australian athletics were backward and needed a good shake-up he was labelled a big-head and was very nearly disqualified. Isn't it extraordinary that, apart from the big names, Australia's athletes are second-rate? Perhaps it isn't so extraordinary when you consider that there is only one decent track in Australia, a continent whose size swallows Europe. Drastic changes are needed in the way athletics are run there, if Australian boys and girls are to have a real chance. Those Australian girls, Betty Cuthbert and Marlene Matthews, were the world's best in 1960.

Yet they didn't even make the finals at the Olympics.

Finally, Australia's grandest athlete—Herb Elliott. He is a diplomat, a sportsman and one of those 'greats' of sport who appear once in a generation.

Australia is to put on the Empire Games at Perth in 1962. This is the home of Elliott and that famous hurdler and Olympic gold medallist, Shirley Strickland. Perth is a city which will do a great job for the athletes of the Commonwealth and Empire, for it is divorced by vast distance from the self-opinionated Victorian and New South Wales Associations. So, let us look forward to the sunshine and success of Perth and hope that the visiting athletes will leave behind them the necessary stimulus to set Australian athletics off on a crusade for greater successes.

Chapter 18

NEW ZEALAND—A DREAM COME TRUE

The Australians make a great show of seeing a boat out, and as Shirley and I arrived at Sydney docks *en route* for New Zealand the liner seemed already to be woven to the quay by masses of coloured streamers held by laughing passengers and friends. The *Wanganella* laboured away from the quay, finally freeing herself from the streamers which drifted on the water to a sigh from the passengers. We passed under the huge span of the harbour bridge and glided between yachts and ferry boats. The calm, sheltered waters gave way to the sullen swell of the Tasman Sea, and the Australian coastline soon disappeared.

English people often lump Australia and New Zealand together as if they were the same country. But the boat passage between them took four and a half days. We passed the time sun-bathing, playing table tennis or watching the flying fish. Aboard the *Wanganella* we became acquainted with New Zealanders. They are very similar in every way to Englishmen. Naturally, many would deny this. As one New Zealander said to me, "You can tell an Englishman by the way he dresses." But New Zealand fishermen and trampers are quite indistinguishable from their English counterparts.

Two distinguished New Zealanders, Sir Leonard and Lady Wright, were on board the *Wanganella*. I met Sir Leonard in the smallest room on the boat. Soon Shirley and I were friends of the large Wright family, who were returning to Dunedin after an Australian holiday centred on the Olympic Games. In such a friendly atmosphere the voyage seemed short. We retired to our cabins for the last time after watching the first lighthouse of New Zealand flashing on the horizon. It was grey and raining as we disembarked at Wellington early next

morning, to be met by Mr Smith, secretary of Petone Athletic Club. Thanks to the Smith family we immediately felt at home. After a week at their house we were met by Ted Beckett, Public Relations Officer for the town of Palmerston North. While we were at the Olympics he had promised to find us a house and a job if we decided to settle down there. Ted and the Glaxo publicity manager, Peter Boyle, took our luggage while Shirley and I drove our scooter nearly 100 miles to Palmerston North. The drive was over the Tararua mountains to the north and along the coast road through places whose names were really intriguing, such as Paraparaumua and Otaki. There were little bays with swimmers in the warm water and many launches and yachts. At a roadside café overlooking the Tasman Sea and Kapiti Island, a bird sanctuary, we enjoyed a 'Cornish tea'. Shirley and I were weak-willed and allowed ourselves to be plied with far too many delicious hot scones loaded with cream.

Soon the road cut inland, and we pointed out each new view excitedly as we breezed along on our scooter. Wild flowers grew in great splashes of colour in the hedgerows. The warm climate encourages prolific growth, and many flowers that we associated with hothouses at home appeared anywhere in this countryside of the Manawatu. At one point we caught up an old lorry with a load of straw bales which wobbled dangerously. I was forced to overtake on a blind corner to miss the bales as they tumbled across the road.

The residents of Palmerston North made us feel very much at home. The Mayor and town council entertained us to tea, following which we went with the Park Superintendent to the beautiful forest reserve 20 miles away. Although we had been attracted to Palmerston North to join in the summer Games, we neglected our training in favour of sight-seeing, and roamed the countryside in all directions on the motor scooter. Everyone in New Zealand seems to go to the seaside at week-ends. We joined the stream of cars driving leisurely to the sea.

Next we drove to Wellington, where I lost my hand-tooled Russian wallet which held £20 and some four-leaf clovers an English well-wisher had given me for the Olympics. Also in the wallet were photographs and my driving licence. Then we flew to Dunedin, in the south island, where we were invited to stay in the grand home of Sir Leonard and Lady Wright, situated in beautiful grounds. We enjoyed ourselves there very much, playing tennis and surfing.

The then Prime Minister, Mr Sidney Holland, came to Sir Leonard Wright's for lunch one day. Mr Holland was a tremendous man, with conjuring tricks, puzzles and anecdotes by the thousand. When he was around everyone was very amused. He taught his tricks to the Wrights, so there was never a dull moment.

We drove with junior members of the Wright family to the annual carnival parade through the streets of Dunedin, past assembled dignitaries in the Octagon outside the town hall. Officials ushered us to places in the enclosure, and Shirley and I found ourselves sitting beside the Prime Minister. He was immensely popular with the crowd. People shouted, "How are you, Sid?" Clowns rushed up and presented him with the 'title deeds' to White Island—an active volcano off the coast. Sid accepted their oration and gift amid roars of laughter. The parade was a crazy affair, but there were some serious floats depicting life in Otago. Military and Scottish bands led the march past. Clowns rushed about everywhere on huge or tiny bicycles with the oddest combination of big wheels and small ones, or even bent and oval wheels.

The athletic meeting was attended by a huge crowd, and Merv Lincoln of Australia won the mile in a New Zealand record of 4 min 1·8 s, extremely fast for the beautiful springy turf track. I ran 4 min 20 s or thereabouts. New Zealand food had been putting too much weight on me. I met Don Jowett, former New Zealand Empire Games 220 yds champion. He had given up athletics because he had been left out of the Olympics at Melbourne. He was not alone in his disappointment, for wherever I was in New Zealand the people—all of whom were sports-mad—complained bitterly about the selection of the New Zealand teams for the Olympics. Apparently the public subscribed enough money for many more athletes to be sent to the Games than the official body nominated, and there were terrific rows about it. What was worse, many New Zealand athletes went to Melbourne at the time of the Games and offered to bear their own expenses. But the Association would not enter them.

Murray Halberg had been New Zealand's leading athlete for two or three years by 1957, but athletics is a minor sport there and Murray was hard put to earn his bread and butter. He gave up many jobs in order to train, and his sacrifices brought him the highest honours. But it was a shame to see him hard up.

Back in Palmerston North, life wasn't all pleasure for us. Between

surfing and looking at the scenery I worked as a garage attendant, as a painter at the Shell Petroleum depot and as a potato-picker. Potato-picking was a very profitable business, and I was able to earn £7 for a very hard day's work. Shirley was the first female potato-picker they had seen on the farm. Because we went at the job like a bull at a gate we only lasted for three days and then had to rest our stiff backs.

Several excursions interrupted our stay in Palmerston North. We scootered to New Plymouth, nearly 200 miles away in the shadow of Mount Egmont, an extinct, snow-capped volcano familiar to English people on hoardings advertising New Zealand butter. The road skirted the coast, so we stopped many times to surf and sun-bathe, and by the time we returned to Palmerston North our skins were finely tanned.

Another trip was to Auckland, nearly 400 miles distant. We set off in the evening, driving 70 miles over the mountains to Taihape, and slept the night on the ground at a picturesque camping site by a deep stream. A sharp frost woke us during the night, and there was a small earth-tremor, which is quite a common occurrence in New Zealand. From our camping site the road climbed steadily, and soon the snow-covered peak of Mount Ruapehu came into view in the cold, still air. Our scooter tank was filled at Waiouru, the last petrol station for 70 miles. Then we drove across a high plateau and saw hawks, deer and only an occasional car. On our left Mount Ruapehu was now shrouded in white clouds but ahead the black cone of Mount Ngauruhoe was smoking quietly. Soon we could see Lake Taupu ahead. In the clear air it was difficult to appreciate that we were an hour's drive from this 20-mile-long lake, for it seemed to lie below like a bright blue pond only a stone's throw away.

On the horizon plumes of steam, like tiny ostrich feathers, marked the Wairakei geysers. Now the road descended through forest and farm land, crossing mountain streams with fine trout pools renowned among New Zealand fishermen. We marvelled at the geysers we had seen from the road 50 miles or so back. The escaping steam, which we were told by a local Maori came from 1¼ miles down in the earth, made a deafening, rumbling roar and left the air pungent with the smell of sulphur.

Auckland was soon in sight. The air in New Zealand is so clean and clear we could view One Tree Hill and the city from 30 miles away. After Palmerston North, Auckland seemed huge. It is a fine

place with many green parks and sports fields. It is built on and around the remains of seven extinct volcanoes. From one of these we saw to the north and east the islands in the Pacific scattered about as far as the horizon. The landlocked harbours of the Manukau and Waitemata lay on the south and north. The Waitakere range of mountains straddles the land mass to the north west, leaving occasional glimpses of the Tasman Sea for the searching eye. Immediately below, in the very jaws of the city, lay the liners and freighters which give the nation its life-blood.

Auckland is an Englishman's dream come true. The city and sea are side by side. On week-ends and holidays the land-locked harbour and the sea outside are dotted with yachts and launches like a Cowes Regatta.

The reason for our visit was to meet friends arriving from San Francisco on the *Orcades*. Three weeks later we scootered to Auckland again, this time to meet Shirley's parents off the ship from Britain. They had decided to emigrate to New Zealand. We had a heart-warming reunion with them at the docks and did our best as 'old hands' in New Zealand to advise Mr and Mrs Hampton as to their conduct in their new land. We knew—we had been in New Zealand for six exciting weeks.

But our time there was running out. At the Melbourne Games a Swedish promoter had offered to pay our fares round the world and to defray our expenses for a tour in Scandinavia. We accepted.

The days passed in a rush while we removed our belongings to Auckland from Palmerston North and tried our legs out again for the running arenas of Europe. Mine were useless, and I could not cover a mile at a snail's pace. This was a shock, since only a few months before I had been running world records. However, I set about the hard task of getting fit. I was a stone overweight as a result of New Zealand's fine meat and butter. I little realized then that it would take me fully five months of sweat and toil to counteract my three months of inactivity.

Chapter 19

THE WONDERFUL POLES

SHIRLEY and I arrived back in London from Australia in May 1957 and I was in the worst state of fitness I have yet experienced. My unwilling body responded slowly and I ran a little, mainly for South London Harriers.

In July Shirley and I caught the plane for Stockholm, where we were to have our first race. Luck was against us for, in the 200-m race for women, Shirley heard a sharp crack and collapsed on the fencing alongside the track. The doctor examined her leg and, seeing that her achilles tendon was broken, declared she would never run again. As I knelt over her as she lay on the stretcher Shirley put her head on my shoulder and burst into tears. I looked at her horribly distorted left foreleg. It made me feel ill, and a lump came into my throat as I watched Shirley disappear into the first-aid room. This completely put me off my running but I had to start in the 5,000-m race. The promoter was not excited because, although I won, I only did it in 14 min 14·2 s. Are athletes machines?

When we left Stockholm I had to carry Shirley around on my back. Instead of going straight to hospital we had to go to the seaside for the week-end as arranged by the promoters. When Shirley reached the operating theatre in Malmö four days later the surgeon raised his hands in despair saying, "Oh dear, it is probably too late for us to make anything useful out of your leg. You ought to have had an operation immediately the tendon was broken." But he did such a fine job that he proved his own fears wrong. Shirley lay in hospital, while I was run up and down the country like a performing monkey. On returning to Malmö I was astounded when Shirley walked into the hotel on crutches, having been turned out of hospital. The Swedes

wanted me to leave her in an hotel room while I travelled to Denmark, but I refused to leave her.

On August 14 we left the athletes' 'circus' to stay with the Berentsen family in Bergen, Norway. I was selected to represent Great Britain against Russia in London, and by then I was running in my best form thanks to the help Paul Soine, the South African ½-mile champion who was on his honeymoon in Europe, gave me. Shirley and I flew to London, where I trained in Hyde Park the day before the race. While running near the Albert Memorial I trod in a pothole and twisted my ankle. I hobbled on, trying to disguise the pain, but my foot seemed to be on fire. I cursed my carelessness. Fancy throwing away my chances by such a silly accident. Ibbotson, now the world mile record-holder, Bolotnikov and possibly Kuts, were to be in the race next day, and I would need all the luck in the world to beat them.

At Lancaster Court Hotel, where the teams were living, the only treatment available was at the hands of the opposition's masseur. The Russian was only too willing to help me and he spent some 40 minutes working on my ankle with a hot liniment which brought blisters to the skin. He repeated his massage the following morning and immediately before the race. Kuts had scratched, but Bolotnikov went crazy at the start and Ibbotson followed my nervous pace for a couple of laps before speeding past me to catch Bolotnikov. We rejoined the tiring Russian at 4 laps and the race was between the three of us. At the bell Ibbotson moved closer to the Russian as the crowd roared, and I strode easily behind them both in the second lane waiting for Derek's move. The sprint came suddenly. Ibbotson thrust himself forward but tired himself unnecessarily with his wild arm movements. As we entered the straight I put my head down and drove hard for the tape. Ibbotson folded and I strode in the winner with easy steps.

This was a funny moment for, unknown to me, BBC Television had arranged to interview Ibbotson immediately he had won the race. There was confusion in their ranks and Paul Fox, the producer, ran round the track begging me for an interview. I refused point-blank because at the time they owed me my travelling expenses for appearing on 'Sportsview' earlier that summer.

My ankle was weak for a few days, but Stan Tomlin wrote in an athletic magazine that the accident was merely a publicity stunt in the event of my losing the race. A mighty painful publicity stunt!

Without delay Shirley and I flew back to Sweden, where I was to race the mile at Göteborg. The organisers thought differently and told me, "5,000 m or nothing." So I left. I was upset because they had agreed earlier that I should race the shorter distance, since I had just raced the longer one in London. The Australian athlete, Alan Lawrence, helped me carry our bags out of the hotel and, with Shirley getting along as best she could on crutches, we went to the station and caught a train to Malmö. The Göteborg meeting had already begun while we were travelling. The announcer at the stadium told the crowd that Pirie had disappeared but that was OK for them because it saved them 1,000 kroner (about £75). The Swedish newspapers next day carried articles saying I was being paid 1,000 kr to run. The truth was that this sum was to be given from the gate money to the organizers of our trip to finance our air tickets. I knew nothing of these arrangements then. But some English newspapers started on one of their periodical wild-goose chases, trying to unveil me as a professional. In fact I was paying a considerable sum out of my own pocket instead of making money.

A few days later a meeting was to be held at Malmö, and I asked to be entered for the mile race. Again this request was turned down. They told me I must race 5,000 m. Wasn't Pirie the world-record holder over that distance? Their argument was that no one would pay to watch me run the mile. The only way I could run the shorter distance was to promise to race 5,000 m as well. The interval between these two races was 25 minutes. This was no mean task, since Alan Lawrence was contesting the 5,000 m together with the leading Danish and Swedish athletes.

In the mile an athlete had been delegated to do the pace-making over the first ½ mile. My idea was to follow him and make the pace myself on the third lap. This would mean that Waern of Sweden and Roger Moens of Belgium would have to make up ground on me as they made their efforts on the final lap. When these two passed me, another Swede cut in front and ran me into the edge of the track round the first bend of the last lap. On the back straight I switched to the lane outside this intruder, hoping to cut down the 4 yds the two leaders had gained. But my bodyguard moved out and blocked my path again when I tried to pass. This went on until I was running around the final bend in the third lane and so it was up to the finishing straight. The result was: Waern, 3 min 58·5 s, Moens 3 min 58·9 s,

my antagonist 4 min 0·4 s, and myself 4 min 0·9 s. Once again my hopes of a four-minute mile were not realized. Thanks to some shady business I had been left out of the 'Four-minute Mile Club', and the 5,000 m, which I won, was left as my only reward. In this race I had a tremendous battle with Alan Lawrence, the Australian, despite the mis-counting of laps by the officials.

I was relieved and proud to hear while in Malmö that the British Board had selected me to represent Britain in matches against Poland and Western Germany. This would mean a respite from commercialized athletics. Shirley was still on crutches. I was grateful for the kindness and consideration of Jack Crump and Harold Abrahams, who paid her expenses to go with me to Warsaw and Hanover for these events.

Warsaw's scarred buildings were a pathetic sight, and the great Communist building in its centre was a mockery among the remains of the main street. Against this background the people were really magnificent. We received some of the best treatment a British team has received anywhere. But the atmosphere was always tainted with politics. The Poles looked over their shoulders nervously when conversing. It was only with the background of a lot of pleasant noise from the hotel orchestra that we were able to discuss the political situation freely.

Shirley had brought oranges from Sweden. The chambermaid's daughter had never seen one before. We had to show her how to peel and eat it. We gave chewing-gum to small boys. One received a whole packet but he offered pieces to the other urchins. When one of them was offered a piece he said, "No, I have had one piece, thanks. Give it to another boy."

It would be a revelation to the strikers and moaners all over the world to visit Poland and to see how, despite their abject poverty, they do not grumble but set great value on the small things of life. I believe that in this over-civilized world those who have the hardest lot and the least wealth are often the happiest and the healthiest.

The rubble of the devastated city was used to build the stadium on the bank of the Vistula. The track was one of the finest I have ever run on. The two-day athletic meeting was attended by a very intelligent and sporting half-capacity crowd. The day following the meeting the stadium was jammed to its 170,000 capacity by a harvest festival dancing display. This illustrated the terrific national spirit.

Poles are so fiercely proud to be Poles that even Russians feared to compete against them in athletics until the last few years. Then the Poles—the little, undernourished Poles—beat the athletic might of the USSR. We clearly saw this spirit among the Polish athletes. They were always a team just as if they had trained together in a camp. They had the best-organized team cheering I have heard and they always sang their national anthem powerfully when they won big athletic championships. No wonder they won. Combined with this they are fine sportsmen, and I can count many friends from Poland.

They beat the British team handsomely, but George Knight ran the world's fastest 10,000 m of 1957, lapping Eldon and leaving his Polish opponents cold. I called his lap times. George ran every lap at 70–71 s. What a pity our system is so badly lacking that George Knight's talent was never properly encouraged and he was allowed to fall by the wayside after that terrific season.

In the 5,000-m race Zimny tried the Polish tactics of making bursts but to no avail, for I won without much trouble, followed by Zimny, Krzyszkowiak and Laurie Reed, who had started serious athletics training with me four years earlier on Coulsdon Downs. Laurie's performance that day was outstanding running for an athlete of 22, but because he came in last it was completely overlooked.

Several of us in the British team set off to Copenhagen on our way to Finland for further races, before the match against Germany at Hanover. In Copenhagen I was taken ill for three days with dysentery. After a diet of black tea and water I felt more like a skeleton than usual. Journalists Peter Wilson and Clifford Webb arrived offering me any-anything I needed. When I reached Hanover I started light exercise. The team had three days before the match, and I spent the whole of my time training to the limit of my weak body's ability. I felt a little better by the day of the match but I was really unfit to race at all, let alone in the fierce competition of an international event. Some key members of the team played football and, what's more, the press and their photographers encouraged them. This lack of correct preparation, combined with the fact that the team coach, Geoff Dyson, had been stripped of all authority by the B.A.A.B., helped the Germans to defeat us overwhelmingly.

Although the German team were superior as a whole, if we had done our best we should have had a good chance of avoiding defeat. The two highlights were Mike Ellis's British-record hammer throw

and George Knight's 10,000 m in 29 min 16·8 s, only 10 s slower than his world's fastest in Warsaw the previous week. I ran second in that 10,000 m after winning the 5,000 m.

The day after the match a group of us, under the captaincy of John Disley, set off to race in Finland at the famous Turku track. This town has a unique stadium. It was here that John Landy of Australia ran his world-record mile of 3 min 57·9 s in 1954, and Zatopek his world-record 10,000 m in 29 min 2·6 s in 1950.

Ibbotson, Disley and I, were to race in the 2 miles with Vuorisalo, the Finn. It was publicized as a world-record attempt, much to my chagrin. The two races in Germany had made certain that if there were to be a record pace I would not be concerned. When Ibbotson ran a mile the previous week in Helsinki, three Finnish runners, including Vuorisalo, boxed him in and Derek landed up on the grass in the last 100 yds instead of winning. Consequently I was a little apprehensive of the treatment we might receive here.

A pacemaker had been nominated by the organizers as is customary in Scandinavia. He led through four laps and then stopped dead in front of Ibbotson who, after doing a neat side-step, continued running easily but in the awkward front position. I was second and making heavy work of it, Vuorisalo third and Disley fourth. That was how we circled the track until the bell went for the last lap. On the back straight the Finn sprinted past and I followed in second position. Round the bend we strode, and on entering the straight I moved up to Vuorisalo's shoulder hoping to wear him down. He glanced at me and cut across, forcing me to slow down and take the inside lane to avoid hitting him. He won by a yard from me with Ibbotson third. I protested to the referee and asked for Vuorisalo to be cautioned for what I considered to be unsportsmanlike behaviour. At the same time I told them there was no question of the incident's having altered the result of the race. Vuorisalo's answer was that he hadn't seen me, and that was that!

While I was in Finland I was told some fantastic stories about their athletics. They said one famous Finnish athlete had recently been paid £1,000 commission to stay with his club because they earned so much money from his appearances in big meetings. Other stars are said to earn £3,000 in a single season. The extraordinary result of this system is the production of really great performers, but not great competitors. It proves the evils of direct professionalism in athletics.

Mr and Mrs Lasse Virtanen (Lasse was a Finnish Olympics medallist in 1932 and 1936) took Shirley and me to their country house. It was a long ride out of Turku into the pine forests over gravel tracks. The timber house was on an island in a lake. The rowing-boat tied to a small jetty by the Sauna bath made a peaceful picture. Lasse told us how they skied there in the winter and relaxed in the hot steam-bath before plunging into the lake through a hole in the ice. We had a happy afternoon in the solitude of the woods. Tea and sandwiches with berries and fruit satisfied our appetites, which were sharpened by the cold air. But I was feeling run-down. I had swollen glands and excessive fatigue, and was longing for the end of our Scandinavian tour. We went on to Sweden, and I rested most of the time before the races. In Stockholm I won over 5,000 m and in Göteborg over 3,000 m, but the effort was too much. I felt so ill that I thought I should need several weeks in bed. I wrote asking to withdraw from the London *v.* Warsaw match at the White City, but great pressure was put on me to take part. It was a pity for all concerned that I consented to try—most of all for me. I might as well have walked round the track. It was the most pathetic thing I have ever done. I was not far short of a lap behind Knight, Chromik and Zimny, although I had defeated Zimny in Warsaw just previously. My only concern was to negotiate twelve and a half laps and return home to bed. Most of the time during the winter of 1957–58 I was unable to train, and when I did try some exercise it produced a temperature and swollen glands. I tried again and again to begin training but was nowhere in the cross-country events I entered.

In the spring of 1958 I decided to visit Freiburg to train under Gerschler. Maureen Brazier, Croydon Harriers discus champion, Mike Wiggs and Bob Harvey, both outstanding juniors, accompanied us in the Volkswagen bus we had just bought. We drove hard across Belgium to La Hulpe beyond Brussels, where we distance runners took part in a cross-country race. Then we rushed off towards Germany and reached the Aachen customs at past midnight. The German on duty had a good sense of humour. "Are you eloping?" he asked when he peered into the windows of the bus at the bodies stacked inside.

I drove until I could not drive any longer, and we fell asleep in a parking place on the autobahn south of Cologne. On reaching Freiburg shortly after, we slept for about 14 hours to make up for the

Derek Johnson, Britain's greatest all-round runner, leaves me well behind to win the half-mile at the Kinnaird Trophy meeting, 1955.

PIRIE - 1:53.3

I win the 3,000 metres from Derek Ibbotson at Manchester, 1956, The newspaper caption to this picture said "Pirie moved up with apparent ease to be first at the tape". In fact, this was one of the most exhausting races I have ever run. 8:09.4

My greatest race. During the world record 3,000 metres, September 9th, 1956. At this point Iharos leads and Rozsavoglyi is third. You can see the pain on our faces.

My second finest race. The world record 5,000 metres in June, 1956. Kuts, who was second, is just coming into this picture.

journey. Training and tests in the clinic were the usual routine, but when we were out shopping we landed in trouble. Maureen Brazier and Shirley walked across the street against the lights. A 6 ft 2 in policeman whistled at the girls, but of course they didn't turn because they were unaware of their mistake. This made the policeman mad. I watched him bound across the road and grab the girls by the sleeve. He started a tirade against them in German, and Maureen and Shirley hadn't a clue what he was ranting about. He then dragged them into the office of the tramways. I had been watching this performance calmly with Mike Wiggs and Bob Harvey. We crossed over when the lights changed, and went into the office to see if I could settle the argument. The policeman turned on me and rudely told me to get out. I pointed to Shirley and said, "*Mein frau.*" He then grabbed me by the scruff of the neck, twisted my right arm and threw me outside on the pavement. Bob Harvey was outside and I told him, "That's assault. I'm going back." I went back. Inside, the policeman started yelling at me again but he didn't get rid of me.

A man in the office had phoned the police station and a Black Maria screeched to a stop outside. Four tough, storm-trooper types rushed in and heaved me in the back of the van and man-handled the girls in after me. A large crowd watched this performance with awe. At the police station we were taken to an attic where greatcoats and steel helmets lined the walls and the only furniture was a couple of old tables and chairs. The police would not bring an interpreter or let us phone anyone for help. The policeman who started the performance kept on ranting at us and repeating "Old England" in a sneering voice. He also said, in German of course, "Americans, Negroes and English, they never have money to pay fines and they never understand German."

After an hour of this contemptuous treatment an officer who spoke English came in. He strode up and down in his jackboots and peaked military cap, smoking a cigarette in a long silver holder. "So you want a lawyer," he drawled. "You may have one, but we are the law in Germany and we tell the lawyers what to do." He wouldn't let me telephone the British Embassy in Bonn nor would he agree that his policeman had been hot-headed and extremely rude. He insisted that we pay a fine—11 marks for the two girls for their traffic offence and 8 marks for me for 'assaulting the policeman'. He pointed out that a policeman in Germany is untouchable. Apparently you can be beaten to death by the police there but you can't raise a finger in

self-defence. After two and a half hours of confining us in the dingy attic they relented when we told them that we were staying in the Olympic House in the University Sports Centre. They then fell over backwards to help us and wanted to shake hands when we left after paying 3 marks fine for each of the girls. The story got around to the papers, and I received an apology from the Burgomaster of Freiburg for the policeman's behaviour.

The president of the local athletic association arrived as we were packing to leave for England a couple of days later. He gave the girls a bouquet of flowers each and apologized for the way we had been treated. I told him not to worry as it was all over as far as we were concerned. But he said it was ridiculous for the police to behave the way they did, because Freiburg relies on the tourist trade for its livelihood, and he felt bad about it because I had been their guest and friend for so many years. As a farewell gift we bought a chocolate monkey and sent it to the policeman, named Seeman, who caused the trouble. It was labelled 'from Old England'.

As the weather improved at last, my health and fitness returned but it was too late for me to expect a sparkling track season. Billy Morton of Dublin invited me and other British runners to compete at Santry Stadium in a race on May 18. The passenger next to me on the plane to Dublin offered me a lift from the airport into town in his friend's Morris Minor. His friend turned out to be an excellent driver, and I was able to relax as we drove to town. Then the car in front stopped dead. We skidded to a standstill barely six inches from the rear of his car and sighed with relief. Our relief was premature. The next second a car slammed into our boot, shunting us smack into the front car and then hitting us again on the rebound. I knocked myself out on the windscreen, and as I fell back the tipping seat swung forward and hit me in the spine. I climbed out of the car in a daze and walked up and down holding my head and back alternately. When I regained my senses and looked at our car I saw it was smashed in front and back. I thanked the unfortunate owner of the Morris Minor and accepted another lift. This car had a narrow shave with a motor-cycle and a bus, but in due course I was delivered at the hotel. However, I was in a state of delayed shock. I felt cold as a stone and was stuttering. The proprietor knew me and called a doctor. I was put to bed with hot-water bottles and a tot of whiskey. When the doctor

arrived he pronounced me unfit to race. But I did race because, if I had not, I should have felt under an obligation to pay my air fare and hotel accommodation as well as the doctor's fees, which I could not afford. After the race, in which I was beaten by Ibbotson, Terry O'Connor of the London *Evening News* criticized my training and ability. He wasn't in that car.

Only a week later at the White City I was able to prove how wrong he was. For I won the 2 miles race by one twentieth of a second from Szabo of Hungary, with Ibbotson third. I had to admire O'Connor, for he sought me out in the dressing-room and admitted his mistake.

Two days later I ran at Motspur Park, where I won a hard 2-mile race in nearly the same time as the White City result, and went on to run in the mile 20 minutes later, finishing second to Kent-Smith. One headline next day was, 'Pirie Beaten'. How daft can you get?

To round off the week I also won the Surrey 3-mile championship. Thus, in the space of seven days I had run seven races. Hardly a wise thing for any athlete to do. Looking back, I would say it was foolish. At the time I had the notion that this terrific pressure would lift me out of the depression I had suffered all winter.

At the Southern championships Stan Eldon ran a really fine 3-mile race and I had to be content with second place in a time that qualified me for the Empire Games team at Cardiff. This team was announced the following day. I found I had been chosen for the mile, presumably because I was the fastest Englishman in the event that season, but I was not selected for my speciality, the 3 miles. This was an astonishing example of selection which made me furious. I was so anxious to compete in the 3 miles that at Cardiff I made enquiries as to my eligibility for Scotland, since my father ran for Scotland. But I found he was born in Bermuda, so I was ruled out. Then the selectors suddenly did an about-face and included me in the Cardiff 3-mile event. But the dithering about had upset me, and I ran badly in the British championships before Cardiff. Ibbotson did even worse, and had to drop out of that race. In the dressing-rooms I chatted with him, and he was as disappointed as I was. So we agreed to go straight to Cardiff and do some serious training to put things right.

I drove to Wales in the Volkswagen caravan and sought out the Village. I was amazed to be confronted with the same huts which we, the Air Force athletes, had slept in eight years previously. The promoters must have saved a mint of money on those huts, but they cost

the athletes a lot of sleep because of the noisy corridors, bad lighting and inefficient heating. I got permission to sleep in my van outside the camp.

Every day I trained very hard for, after the débâcle in London, I simply had to justify my place in the English team. The officials kept worrying me about the opening ceremony which was a must for all competitors. Eventually, for fun, but with a poker face, I said, "Oh, I'm not going on the parade." This produced an immediate outburst. "You will go on the parade," I was told. So I took out the book of rules which all competitors had been given and read out the following: "Athletes are invited to take part in the opening ceremony."

When the opening day arrived I took out my uniform and laid it out ready. I became engrossed in my training and was late for lunch. On realizing that it was later than I thought I asked the team manager a quarter of an hour before the assembly time if it would be in order for me to go to the stadium in my own transport. He said, "Yes, as long as you are there in plenty of time for the parade." When I reached the stadium there was still an hour to go before the ceremony. Boyd, the captain, rushed up and told me that the team manager wished to see me immediately. When I reached the manager he asked me where I had been when the team assembled at camp. I reminded him that he had given me permission to proceed in my own transport.

Argument followed, and after an exchange of pleasantries he said, "From now on you will obey orders and sleep in camp." Well! well! All I had been doing was training twice a day and resting, unlike some athletes who would have frittered away their time, staying out late and generally acting as if they were at a holiday camp.

That night I couldn't sleep in the hut till 1 o'clock because the lights were incessantly switched on and off and people stamped up and down. Then at 6 a.m. I was woken up by the early trainers—the boxers, cyclists and so on. I dressed and woke the team captain and manager and told them that I had been unable to sleep except for a few odd hours. So I was again given permission to sleep in my motor caravan, but inside the camp instead of a few hundred yards down the road as before. I was not the only one who slept outside, and there were many who wished to get away from the rumpus of the camp but were unable to do so.

As for the Games themselves, the results are in the records, but it is

worth mentioning that I was the first Englishman home in both the mile and 3 miles. Murray Halberg showed his true ability by winning that 3 miles in scintillating style. He told me how he tripped and fell headlong on the grass after the finish. He had a good laugh when he saw newspaper pictures of himself lying prostrate and captioned, 'Murray Halberg ran himself into a state of collapse'. He said he was nowhere near collapse.

At the closing ceremony a group of us played the goat. We included Ibbotson, Mike Agostini (in a hat pinched from a military policewoman), Herb Elliott, Dave Power, Albert Thomas, Chilla Porter, Colin Ridgeway, Jim McCann and me. We rolled up the trousers of our tracksuits and wore an assortment of women's hats to parade right in front of the Duke of Edinburgh's dais. The Duke thought it was great fun, but the officials were scowling, fuming and muttering to each other.

The last night at Cardiff was a wild rag, and the New Zealanders' quarters were devastated next morning. It looked as if they had walked clean through the partitioning of their huts. Later in London the Aussies and New Zealanders really had a 'beaut of a time'. At a stuffy dinner at the Grosvenor with the usual stuffy speeches they really opened up the place, finishing with a battle of bread rolls. When the speeches began they stalked out to sample London's night life.

Since most of the Aussies and New Zealanders were short of money and had used up their quota of days on athletic expenses, Shirley and I arranged for some of them to drive in our motor caravan across the Continent to Stockholm to see the European Games. Eight of them clambered into the van on top of piles of assorted luggage and, unknown to them, a child's potty tied to the back bumper. In a few days they crammed in sight-seeing tours of Paris, the Brussels World Fair, Copenhagen and Stockholm. They ran along behind the van for training en route, and they arrived at Stockholm in time for the opening ceremony, looking like a bunch of tramps. But they were happy at having seen some of Europe. About this time there were reports from Australia that the Athletic Association there was thinking of taking action against Herb Elliott for having too many days 'on expenses'. That was rather silly. Herb had been travelling on a shoestring, sleeping in the open with the others of the motor-caravan party.

The teams competing in the European championships lived in

schools in various Stockholm suburbs. We were near Bromma Airport and only had to jog a mile through the pine woods before reaching a track. The meals provided were in true Swedish style—more than adequate. We shared these comfortable quarters with the small Norwegian team and a lone Maltese, gatecrasher to European athletics. Another party of Australians and New Zealanders, together with Ibbotson, who had been left rather unfairly out of the British team, lived on the far side of town at Bosun, the school of physical education in which the British team had been housed five memorable years before.

Shirley had been unexpectedly selected to run in the women's 440 m. It had been the habit of the selectors to pass her over despite her obvious claims to be included. This meeting was a personal triumph for her. It was only a year since she had broken her achilles tendon in the same Stockholm stadium we had to race in. The same doctor who had told her then that she would never run again, came to see her and was as pleased as punch to find her running.

Shirley and Molly Hiscox, the world-record holder for 440 yds, had a day between heats and the final of their race, so we took a trip to Bosun and relaxed in the sunshine by the peaceful lake with our Australian friends and Murray Halberg.

The Games were held in changeable weather. British athletes did more than was expected of them. We started off on the right foot with Stan Vickers 'running away' with the 20-km walk. Peter Radford and Dave Segal won medals in the sprints, and the Johns, Wrighton and Salisbury, were first and second respectively in the 400 m. Rawson won the 800 m after being the victim of Boysen's cutting in at the start. Rawson was forced to run inside the track for several paces and was surprisingly disqualified. But he was quickly reinstated. Hewson could have minced the opposition in the 800 m but he was strangely nominated for the 1,500 m and won magnificently from Sweden's idol, Dan Waern. This was very lucky for the British selectors, who had picked Hewson despite Ibbotson's faster time at the British Games. Hewson had failed at the Empire Games in the mile. The selectors took a gamble and it came off. It was Brian's determination to do his best at Stockholm to make up for his Cardiff failure that saved the selectors' faces.

The Poles supplied the first two in the 5,000 m on a terrible day when the track was so flooded that the race ought to have been

postponed. In distance-running there has developed a new technique in which the fastest performer's style is similar to that of a middle-distance athlete. This method employs a quick rhythm, and the runner puts the stress on the toes to give a stabbing drive off the track. In the 5,000 m at Stockholm none of the runners using this technique was able to run within 20–30 s of his best. The surface of the track was so soft that one's foot slipped away completely on the drive-off. It was pathetic for every one except those who tended to 'plod' with the old flat-footed style. In such conditions Krzyszkowiak's time of 13 min 53·4 s was really a fantastic effort and Zimny ran magnificently for second place. Both times were superior to Kuts's championship record of four years before. I was third in 14 min 0·6 s.

Fred Norris ran a gallant third in the world's fastest marathon. Such was the pace that the Olympic marathon champion, Alain Mimoun, was run out of the race by the 20-mile post. I was talking to Fred under the stands as he and the Russian waited to collect their medals. Fred was exhausted. He nodded towards the Russians and said, "Look at those blighters. You'd think they'd been out for a Sunday stroll." He told me how he was running with the second Russian at the last refreshment post. He thought he had a chance of beating this fellow, who appeared to have had enough. But the Russian's drink might have been high-octane petrol, for he immediately changed gear and left our poor Fred wondering if he was going backwards.

In the shot-putt Arthur Rowe fared badly until the very last round, when he seemed to be out of the running. The Russian and German champions received terrific cheers with their best-ever putts just before Arthur's last attempt. That so nettled Arthur that he went into the circle with true Yorkshire spirit. He let go with an enormous putt which won the championship medal. I was told that one of the other medallists wouldn't shake hands with Arthur. A bad sport? Maybe he didn't want his hand injured.

The women's events brought a 100-m gold medal to Britain for Heather Young, but in the 200 m which we thought was in the bag, June Paul was afflicted with very nearly the same injury which Shirley had suffered the previous year. The 400 m had just been introduced for women but there were still arguments as to whether this race was too strenuous for them. On this occasion horse-like Itkina of Russia won as she pleased, and behind her Molly Hiscox and my wife

Shirley had a neck-and-neck struggle for third place. Molly won and Shirley, in her losing lunge for the tape, tripped and fell flat on her face. In the dressing-room Molly passed out and was not able to attend the victory ceremony. The critics used this to suggest that the 400 m was too strenuous for women, but there would be very few events in men's athletics if we abandoned those races in which the competitors collapsed. I think all the athletes who know Molly well will agree that she becomes very nervous before big races and that her collapse was more psychological than physical.

The Russian coach, Korobov, considered the 800 m all sewn up for his girls. "One, two and three for Russia," he said as the gun was fired. Diane Leather, now Mrs Charles, evidently did not hear him for she very nearly won. She had to be content with second place in her personal best time.

Under the stands Murray Halberg introduced me to a South African journalist, Alec Eales, who was anxious for some athletes to run in South Africa. I said that I was very interested, provided I could obtain the necessary permit from Jack Crump. We agreed to leave London on September 25.

An account of our stay in Stockholm would hardly be complete without mentioning a well-known English family living there. Mr and Mrs Roberts have the gift of making anyone feel really at home. Before we left for further races in Scandinavia the luckier ones in the team enjoyed a quiet party in the Roberts's home.

The Aussies were again left in possession of our van while we flew to race in Oslo. We were to meet them later in Göteborg for one of Sven Stromberg's athletic galas in the new Ullevi Stadium.

At Bislet Stadium, Oslo, I was persuaded to run in the 3,000-m steeplechase. The arena was flooded by rain. I ran with Rzhishchin, the Russian, and was scared of breaking a leg, but I managed the obstacles and clocked 9 min 6·8 s, 60 yds behind the Russian. On the second day I was only entered for the 1,500 m and ran 3 min 47·2 s, a good time which did not satisfy me, as I was seventh behind Merv Lincoln and others. I saw the 5,000-m runners were about to start so I asked the officials if I might compete. The Norwegians are always anxious to give anyone a race, so they agreed.

The Russian Zhukov, who was second in the European 10,000 m, Szabo, and Zatopek's capable protégé, Jurek, were in the field. After the 1,500 m the pace seemed a dawdle, so I enjoyed myself by rushing

into the lead and spoiling the others' concentration. That is, until Jurek took charge in the last few laps and had us all with our tongues hanging out trying to keep up with him. At the bell I was fourth and Szabo looked particularly menacing. To my surprise he dropped out as the pace increased under Jurek's command. I forced myself up to Jurek's heels and we soon left the others. It was neck-and-neck as we tore down the finishing straight, but Jurek weakened for me to win by 5 yds. The last lap had taken me 57·2 s. They presented me with a pair of skis for my three races in that meeting.

I was feeling in much better form now and anxiously awaited the Göteborg race over 5,000 m. This meeting was where Herb Elliott astonished everyone by breaking the world 1,500-m record in 3 min 36 s. Fantastic! Waern, who had run second in the European Championships, was left in the distance by Herb despite his running a Swedish record. Our 5,000 m was rather an anticlimax after that, but I managed to run the world's fastest 5,000 for that year and Jurek broke Zatopek's Czech record by some 5 s. Shirley ran second in the 400 m here in 55·5 s, her personal best time.

The following day we enjoyed our drive through the Swedish countryside to Malmö, where there was a day's rest before more competitions. On arriving at our hotel we heard the Jamaicans' team manager arguing with the proprietor for putting four of his boys in one room. "What do you think we are? Animals? You can put Russians six in a room, but remember, we are human beings."

The organizers in Malmö were businessmen first and foremost. Their interest in athletics was restricted to the gate money. They wanted me for the 3,000 m, but I was tired after the hard race in Göteborg so I only wanted to race the mile. Here again I had to say I would run 3,000 m as well.

This mile was perhaps the most remarkable revelation of Herb Elliott's ability. The track was new and very soft, and the weather cold with a blustery wind. Herb won in 3 min 59·2 s, and Waern was a distant second. But the most extraordinary fact about this race was that in the dressing-room Herb told his opponents exactly what his tactics would be. He announced that he intended sprinting from the 300-m mark, so everyone was waiting to counter the sprint when it came. But Herb left everyone cold. It was an incredible race, particularly as he had just set up his world-record 1,500 m. I managed to finish

sixth in my best time that year of 4 min 3·8 s, and Ibbotson was seventh in 4 min 4·1 s.

The Scandinavian merry-go-round was nearly over. We went on to Oslo where Elliott again pulled out a marvellous 1,500 m. Elliott had come from London where he had run the mile in 3 min 55·4 s. European champion, Hewson, in fresh condition recorded his personal best in this race of 3 min 58·6 s, but it was just not good enough to get near Elliott. In Oslo Elliott's time was 'only' 3 min 37·6 s, so it received merely polite applause. In the 5,000 m I beat Albert Thomas and Dave Power of Australia. The last 100 m was run at sprinters' speed. Shirley ran a fine 200 m in 24·7 s, and so became the fastest English girl, for June Paul had retired. It was Shirley's birthday and the organizers gave her a present of a pair of skis.

On our last evening in Norway, Shirley and I stayed with our friend Frank Steffensen and trained in the wonderful Ekeberg fields and woods overlooking Oslo Fjord. Before leaving Oslo I received a surprise invitation to represent Britain *in the steeplechase* against France in Paris. But Shirley was again passed over for the British team. What can you make of such selection?

We drove in the van to Paris. I was scared stiff of the steeplechase water jump, and afraid I should amuse the crowd by splashing about in the darn thing. So I practised jumping every day and as a result cracked the fibula of my right leg. That ruled me out of the race. Poor Stan Eldon was called to fill my place. He had even less of a clue about steeplechasing than I had. He brought a roar of laughter from the crowd by standing on the bar of the water jump each time round and then plunging waist deep into the lovely cool water.

To return for a moment to our stay in Norway: it was on the Ekeberg fields beside Oslo Fjord where we first met an unusual, ginger-haired figure wearing only shorts. His skin was like mahogany and he had a springy gait like a wild animal. I soon got to know him and we ran round together. He was Sverre Fjelstad, a naturalist and 'nature boy'. He was inseparable from his faithful dog, Kim, who guarded his shoes, camera and rings for marking birds while Sverre ran. I have spent many long hours chatting with Sverre since that first meeting and found his wisdom and knowledge a wonderful inspiration. On one of his filming trips to America he visited the Indians in their wild reserves. A helicopter flew him and his cameras

into the wilds where three Indians clad in leather loincloths met him. They waved goodbye to the helicopter and Sverre asked the Indians how far they had travelled to meet him. Fourteen hours' running with only pellets of dried meat to eat, they told him. Sverre was anxious to start work, but he found that it was to take him a full three days' trek to cover the same ground back to the Indian encampment. The Indians taught Sverre how to hunt and stalk, and many other wise things about healthy living.

One Sunday we were swimming in a lake in the wild forest 20 miles from Oslo when Sverre quietly climbed on to the bank and moved very slowly into the woods. He stood for half an hour enticing a moose calf until it was within a few feet of him. Sverre also told me about his stay with the Laplanders for 6 months. He learnt to eat raw reindeer meat and the half-digested moss from the animals' stomachs. One Laplander who was in his eighties ran nimbly all day catching reindeer. If this old fellow tripped over a tree root he jumped up and ran on, always laughing. The Lapps had a laugh for everything. Rounding up and sorting out each family's reindeer took several days. Once the animals stampeded when the task was done, but the Lapps just laughed like mad and started running after the animals again. These people, from Sverre's accounts, have a wonderful way of living with never a harsh word. They apparently draw their fantastic energy from eating so much raw meat and doing a terrific amount of exercise.

Filming wild life takes up a large part of Sverre's time, and he has had many adventures doing this. One film was to be taken on an island down the Oslo Fjord. Sverre was ferried there and left for two weeks with his equipment. Those weeks stretched into months because the man who had promised to pick him up had forgotten. Sverre lived on birds and fish which he caught by guile or with a sling shot. He waved to passing yachts but the occupants just waved back, for who would expect a castaway in Oslo Fjord? Sverre could easily have swum ashore but he couldn't leave his valuable cameras and equipment—and Kim.

His filming routine sounded pretty alarming to me. Imagine going to bed in the woods in a sleeping-bag with snow thick on the ground and the temperature below zero; or sitting in a camouflaged hide-out for 24 hours with mosquitoes biting you all over but you not daring to move a muscle for fear the beaver you were filming would disappear for hours.

Sverre's stamina was fantastic as a result of ski-ing in the woods for days. He could swim 20 miles and thought nothing of rowing miles and miles for fun. And he could run for hours on end. His diet was uncivilized and reminded me of that enjoyed by Dr Barbara Moore, the walking Russian. He normally lived on unpolished rice, milk and goats' cheese, but he could fast for days or live on insects in the woods if he was out of other delicacies.

His dog Kim, or Kimlim, was as intelligent as many a man. He would greet us with all his teeth showing in a wonderful smile, accompanied by an excited rolling of his head and wagging of his hind-quarters. Sverre told me Kim first learnt to smile when they were in the woods. The dog was following in Sverre's ski tracks and ran too closely to the skis. They hit him under the jaw and he fell floundering in the snow. Sverre threw his head back and laughed for all he was worth. Poor old Kim pulled himself up on all fours very sheepishly. Later it was Sverre's turn to fall. He looked up to see Kim rolling his head and showing his teeth in a wonderful grin.

Chapter 20

JOYS AND SORROWS OF SOUTH AFRICA

We returned to London from the Continental tour but were soon packing our bags for our next objective—South Africa. On the first cold day of Autumn we caught the boat train. As we were saying goodbye to family and friends, Jack Crump dashed on to the platform in time to wave us off.

We sailed in the *Caernarvon Castle* from Southampton and had not been long aboard when we were asked to go to the Captain's cabin. He amused us by his salty stories, but the real object of his summons was to tell us of his regret that, because we were tourist-class travellers, we could not train in the only gym, which was provided for the first-class passengers. The only space available for us was an empty and claustrophobic baggage room which we used until the heat became too great in the tropics.

I was unable to sleep because of my lack of exercise and I spent many hours walking round the deck at night. That was an extraordinary experience because I was used to 10 hours' sleep. I would always fly in preference to a boat trip, for the voyage upset my healthy routine and it seemed to waste a lot of time. In between writing a large section of this book the time seemed to be a constant round of meals, deck games and drinks. Our friends enjoyed their gins, whiskeys and other assorted poisons while Shirley and I drowned ourselves in orange squash.

Madeira gave us a welcome break from the boat. As we dropped anchor the liner was surrounded by rowing-boats manned by bronzed divers whose shouts for attention resembled the screams of the seagulls. The boys dived for coins. I went ashore and decided to run up the mountain on whose slopes the town of Funchal is situated. The heat

was oppressive and made me gasp for breath. The inhabitants laughed and shouted at me but I let their remarks pass over my head. I had experienced worse on Tooting Bec Common. At least, here I could not understand the rude comments. I gave up my mad expedition after what seemed a short climb, but when I turned to admire the view I realized that I had come a long way, for the liner looked like a small model in the bay below. The scenery was unusual. Every house and garden was covered in productive plants. Bananas, pumpkins and grapes grew everywhere. I took some snapshots and started on the downward journey, this time at an easy walk. Coming up had been easier. The steep, broad-stepped alleys jarred my legs and the heat made me dizzy. I joined the crowd of passengers in the lighters returning to the liner. They had all had an exciting, merry time and they thought I was mad to spend my time running up a mountain.

While I was away traders had been trying to sell embroidery and wickerwork furniture to the passengers on the ship. Prices for these started high but the cost tumbled suddenly as the boat was about to leave and items could be had for a few shillings instead of pounds. I reached the ship just in time to prevent Shirley from buying two wickerwork chairs for a pound. Imagine carting two chairs round Africa!

Now we headed for the Equator, the flying fishes, the porpoise and the tropical heat. Cape Town was a shock. The natives came on the boat, and I found the atmosphere oppressive, for this was the first time I had seen men treated like animals. Africans like these fellows had been fine sportsmen and friends at the Empire Games, yet their South African blood brothers were obviously quite different. Their only conversation with us whites was limited to an apologetic "Carry your bags, boss?"

South African Customs were the most unreasonable that I had experienced in the world. Their treatment of the English immigrants in particular was disgusting. They insisted on seeing the contents of crates which obviously contained household effects, and they were as obstructive as possible in the course of their duty. The regulations seemed to be designed to keep people out of this country which is the home of so much natural wealth and so little democracy.

For the fourth time in my life I was a 'Jonah' in a car. When our friends Ken Willmott and Bob Harman drove us to town we were involved in a crash. It wasn't a bad one but it shook us up. The scenery on our drive round Cape Town was marvellous.

We took the 'garden route' to Port Elizabeth. This meant one and a half days of hard driving, mostly along miles and miles of perfectly straight roads. Unfortunately, our visit did not coincide with the blooming flowers. We were disappointed not to see one patch of colour. Driving was hair-raising, for at every bend or brow of a hill you could expect the oncoming traffic to be on your side of the road. As there are so few cars per mile in South Africa drivers use the crown of the road and appear to play 'chicken' with each other.

In Port Elizabeth we were met by Alec Eales and Murray Halberg. Murray had flown over two weeks previously. Alec informed me that our first race would be in the Karoo, a parched plateau some 4,000 ft above sea level. With the race only eight days away I had much leeway to make up, for I had not trained since I was in Paris a month before. We spent that week at Meg and Paddy McDowell's home and it was there that we met the domesticated African. The McDowells, like most South Africans, had two native girls working and living on the premises. By law these girls had to live in a separate little house in the garden and their husbands—if they had any—could not live with them. But the Africans here were different from the dockers at Cape Town. They were better dressed and obviously happier because they were receiving relatively decent treatment. They gave such loving care to the children that the youngest insisted on being carried papoose-style on a native girl's back wherever she went on her household chores. On the whole we found white people were kind to the natives. Often Africans came round to the houses begging for work to supplement their meagre incomes. They were always sent away with an odd shilling even if there were no odd jobs for them.

Though I was tired from twice-daily running I enjoyed the McDowells' hospitality and spent a lot of time laughing at their wild sense of humour. I, too, have to laugh when I look at my training book. After a month's lay off it read as follows:

October 11. 8 a.m. 35 minutes' slow running on road.
11 a.m. 40 minutes' running on beach.
5 p.m. 65 minutes' running on track. Very stiff legs.
October 12. 8 a.m. 45 minutes' running on road.
6 p.m. 60 minutes' running on cricket ground including 40 × 100 yds.
October 13. 11 a.m. 60 minutes' fast–slow on track. (Very stiff.)
5 p.m. 90 minutes' on road. (Very stiff.)

October 14. 11 a.m. 90 minutes' fast–slow on track. (Stiff.)
October 15. 11 a.m. 60 minutes' including 15 × 220 yds in 36 s
5 p.m. 110 minutes, 16 miles on road.
October 16. Drove to Middleburg.
October 17. 8 miles' steady running on Middleburg track.
October 18. Raced 3 miles, 15 min 38.5 s.

That schedule reveals how over-anxious I was to run well. If I had taken it much easier this first week in South Africa I would not have become over-tired later. We didn't appreciate how much hard travelling we had ahead. This started with a half-day drive to Middleburg. On this journey we were excited by our first glimpse of African wild life, in the form of huge vultures pulling a carcass to pieces, a herd of springbok, cranes and a large black snake. We stopped to take a photograph of the snake but it disappeared in the grass, followed by boulders thrown by Murray and me. We were told later that we had taken a great risk. When a native sees a snake he drops everything and runs like mad. These snakes, they told us, could 'run' faster than a galloping horse. "Why should we worry?" said Murray.

At Middleburg the hard-working athletic secretary, Fanny Viljoen, told Murray he must run a South African mile record there for he would not find a better track in the Union. This scared us, for we had rarely seen anything worse than the baked mud underlined with stones that pretended to be a track. It looked like a traffic roundabout. From a sprinter's point of view the 100 yds stretch was fine, but the baked mud just could not take a pounding from middle-distance runners.

The public had been misled by the press and radio and were disappointed with Murray's mile of 4 min 16 s, an excellent effort in these conditions. My 3-mile result was regarded with more than contempt by everyone, including myself, but it was very difficult in the dry air. I avoided defeat by a superhuman sprint finish that nearly tore me in two. I learnt after this race that Herbert Schade of Germany had refused to race 3 miles at that altitude in such dry air and instead ran a slow 2 miles, while former world-record holder Werner Lueg was ill after racing at Middleburg.

We were driven 700 miles the following day to reach Cape Town before racing in Paarl two days later. This was unreasonable of our sponsors, for we could not give our best until we had reached a reason-

able state of fitness. At the Paarl meeting Murray set a South African 2-mile record although well below his best form. The local junior runners were very good and I had to fight to take first place in the mile. For these races we wore the very shortest spikes, but we bruised our feet on the concrete-like surface.

We drove back the 500-odd miles to Port Elizabeth where I went to bed with a heavy cold which had affected my hearing. I won a 3-mile race at the local meeting the following day and retired to bed again for a further 24 hours. A 'flat out' mile in 4 min 27·3 s followed by 880 yds in 1 min 57·3 s (behind South African champion McKay) were my next races.

There was an enjoyable beach party with members of the Port Elizabeth Athletic Club. *En route* to the beach we saw little furry monkeys in the bushes and we stopped to give them some of our sandwiches. The South African teenagers enjoyed rock and roll to the accompaniment of a tin whistle. Behind the beach there were sand dunes about 200 ft high. Holidaymakers were sledging down the steep slopes on strips of waxed hardboard. When they hit a pond below they were travelling at about 40 m.p.h. and left a high wake of spray, finally crashing to a standstill in a reed bed. We had exhausting races across the soft sand dunes, competitions for the longest jump down the dunes, and fights for the occupation of the summit between two teams. This was a very enjoyable last day at the coast, then we were off on the next stage of our journey.

We flew to Johannesburg via Kimberley, where the pilot took us low over the famous 'Big Hole' and other diamond mines. At Jo'burg we were taken to the house of Mr and Mrs Roberts. Their home was a small paradise hidden from the street by leafy trees and shrubs. Jacaranda trees shaded the red shale tennis court with mauve blossom which we skimmed from the surface of the cool green swimming-pool. It was peaceful with the cooing of the turtle doves in the fruit trees. At night the cats of the neighbourhood woke Shirley and me by running helter-skelter across the tiles of the summerhouse where we slept. One night we tried to drench them with a hose but they were too clever for us. When we went back to bed we locked ourselves in and switched on the burglar alarm, and the cats came back. The burglar alarm was a necessity, for some of the natives, deprived of the chance to earn a living, turn to stealing. Africans born outside the city limits are not permitted to work in Johannesburg. There are

thousands in this dreadful position. Even the African servants are not safe from thieves. The Roberts's boy had saved for years and bought a sewing-machine and a record-player. They were both stolen one night by fellow natives, and the boy cried his heart out for a couple of days.

We were happy in the Roberts's home because they understood people like us. They are a remarkable sporting family. The eldest daughter performed with great credit at the Melbourne Olympics and the Cardiff Empire Games in the swimming events, and the youngest of the three girls was also outstanding in the water. Mr Roberts played excellent tennis and was a champion in his own right. Finally, Mrs Roberts was a good sport in the true sense of the word and did hard work for native welfare.

Lou Abrams was managing the tour at Jo'burg and he showed us around his diamond-cutting works. We handled stones worth thousands of pounds but the security was too good for Lou to be worried. The skill of the diamond cutters and polishers was fantastic and they certainly deserved the high wages they earned under Lou Abrams and his brother.

A must for tourists in Jo'burg is a visit to a mine dance. Athlete Gerald Evans drove us to the Jack and Simmer mine. At the gate there were Africans having their hair cropped and a native kneeling on the ground playing his home-made percussion instrument oblivious of the milling crowd. The musical effects were produced on instruments made of an assortment of pots and pans, metal tubes and strips of metal cut to varying lengths to produce notes. In addition there were large and small African drums and tin whistles.

The dancing arena was surrounded by a low stand where we had welcome shade beneath a canopy of light thatching. The midday heat was searing, and the square of bare earth was watered before each tribal group came on to dance. They danced so furiously that clouds of dust rose as they stamped their feet to the wild music. Each dance was announced on a notice board, and the teams were led on by a fellow who looked like a fearful witch doctor. It was he who worked the natives into a frenzy of rhythm. It was difficult to persuade the wild dancers to leave the sun-baked square. When they were eventually evicted they disappeared among the barrack quarters, still dancing like mad.

A novelty was a dance imitating the white man's medical examina-

tion. The team danced up to the doctor, an African complete with white overall, stethoscope and mine lamp on his forehead. After a robot-like examination of their hearts the patients somersaulted away and lay flat on the earth. When all the team had been examined they did some fantastic gymnastics, flicking round in time with the beat of the drums and finishing up at a row of tin basins full of water. In a grand finale the water was mouth-sprayed in great pulsing arcs over the dance arena and the empty basins were sent flying after their contents.

The heat on the surface is nothing to what the visitor endures in a gold mine on the Rand. The stratum of gold-bearing rock shelves steeply, and now the workings probe as far down as 10,000 ft. The temperature is around 120 degrees down there, although air is pumped down to make a strong breeze. The workers take a full hour to descend and are issued with kapok jackets which are worn on the return journey to prevent their catching a chill on reaching the 80 or 90 degrees at the surface. I was told the wages paid to the natives were about £7 for a six-month stint and that without them the gold could not be mined economically.

The Rand embraces a huge horseshoe of towns which have sprung up directly above the gold-bearing seams. Many places are now ghost towns where the ramshackle pithead works and former residential districts are empty reminders of the life that used to abound there. Now only rats and birds frequent the tin cans and rubbish of civilization.

Contrasts of standards of living in Jo'burg are appalling. From the beautiful Roberts home we drove across the city and passed through the filthiest shanty-town slums I have seen anywhere in the world. The people are criticized for not keeping the place clean and tidy, but they don't earn enough to afford anything but a little food for the oversized families. Would we worry about keeping a place clean if we had to buy water at 1½d for a dirty bucketful? What would you think if there were thousands of you and your neighbours living on a piece of ground not much bigger than a football pitch? The government has a campaign to keep white people in ignorance of the natives' conditions, and I feel sure that the great majority of white people in South Africa act kindly towards Africans and would be shocked out of their complacency if they were to see the native areas.

Meanwhile, I was training assiduously and getting nowhere. I wanted to do well because Alec Eales and a Mr Taylor of Port Elizabeth were working very hard to make the tour a success and I was

more of a liability than an asset. The Wanderers Club where we trained in the cool of the evening after the daily thunderstorms was only ¼ mile away from the Roberts's home. This is the most gracious and finely situated sports club I have seen on my travels. A few days before the race in Jo'burg I trained with the club boys in a wooded area for about two hours, and we were very tired in the legs on finishing. Leaving the woods I jumped over a 2-ft fence and put my foot between the thick wires. I fell and my ankle was twisted in a tourniquet of wire which acted like a cheese cutter as my momentum pulled my leg through. The athletes with me quickly released my leg but my foot and ankle were multi-coloured and swollen the next morning.

The race was over a mile and was won by Murray Halberg in 4 min 8·6 s from Clarke of South Africa. This was a fantastic time in a temperature of over 95 degrees. I soaked my vest in cold water five minutes before the start and when I had finished ten minutes later it was bone dry. This meeting was staged in the middle of the afternoon when only a meagre crowd collected. I can't understand why it was not held in the cool of the evening, because most sports people were actively engaged during the afternoon and so couldn't go to the races.

A few days later we ran in a superbly organized floodlit meeting at Pretoria. The cool evening enabled Murray to run a South African record of 14 min, 3 s for 3 miles. I was second in 14 min 33·4 s—a reasonable improvement at last. Our next races were at Bloemfontein 300 miles south. There it was still hotter than at Jo'burg. We raced on the finest track in the Union. At the stadium, Murray and I sat in the dressing room with the cold showers full on and the windows shut. This cooled the place down a little. The mile was a reversal of the Jo'burg result with Clarke first in 4 min 8·6 s and Murray second in 4 min 16·0 s. I stood on the back straight shouting Murray on and saw that he was having trouble with his tongue. Poor Murray was utterly exhausted afterwards and he told me his tongue had stuck to the inside of his cheeks because it was so dry. My turn came with 3 miles in the scorching heat. Ironically, as soon as the meeting was over there was a thunderstorm and marvellous rain.

We left at 7.30 p.m. that evening for Durban with six people in a Ford Zephyr. I drove and, apart from a couple of stops for tea and at a road block where police were looking for drug smugglers, we were on the road till 5.30 a.m. With only one day's rest we raced again,

and Murray produced a real sizzler under floodlights, beating Clarke with 4 min 3·8 s, a South African record. Clarke was second in 4 min 5·2 s, and I ran my best race of the trip with a Natal 3-mile record of 14 min 30.0 s.

Back at the hotel, Murray told me that the travelling and the heat were getting him down. He realized that Durban was his last chance of a South African mile record and he made a superhuman effort that evening. He was right, for later, in Rhodesia, he ran as badly as I did, only managing 4 min 25 s for the mile.

On our return to Jo'burg Mr and Mrs Lou Abrams took us on a hurried visit to Kruger Park. The way to see the game is to catch them at breakfast, so we drove slowly through the bush by 5.30 a.m. We were excited with the sight of nimble-footed deer and a couple of giraffes. There were plenty of zebras, tortoise, vultures and other creatures which we identified from a large coloured booklet. At breakfast later we listened to another party who had seen a pride of lions. We were now even more anxious to see lions and elephants, though stories about elephants turning cars over rather damped our enthusiasm. One friendly animal we saw was an old tame hyena who greeted us on the track. When we stopped he tried to climb in through the car window. We laughed at his antics but he was not so amused as one would expect of a hyena!

The only place we were allowed out of the car was at the hippo pool. Here two Africans guarded us from the animals, one with a ·303 rifle and the other with an axe. A short walk through the thick bush brought us to the river. All we could see were the heads and backs of a half dozen hippos enjoying themselves in the muddy, sluggish water.

At dinner in camp another party was talking excitedly about their experiences. They had seen lions killing a giraffe, and the lions had attacked their car. If only we had taken the other route and not stopped at the hippo pool we would have seen this. We had to leave the following day, and in the few hours we had left we drove frantically round hoping to see lions and elephants. No luck, but afterwards in South Africa we saw plenty of colour slides and movie films of the lions and elephants.

We returned to Jo'burg to be looked after by perfect hosts, Mr Beadle and his family, who lived near the Boksburg Golf Course, a fine area for running. Their son Alan was an excellent athlete, so his

parents understood our needs, whether of a huge meal or a quiet rest. I rested a good deal to get my left foot well after the mishap with the fence. I had also developed a strange injury to the toes of my right foot which caused intense pain. I realized later that it was due to the pounding my feet were suffering on the sun-baked surfaces of South African running tracks.

We were to race in Rhodesia, so soon we left by railway for the heart of Africa. The track climbs up and up into a different world. First Bechuanaland which seemed like an endless plain covered with scraggy trees or bushes. At stops, dictated more by the engine's thirst than by the needs of passengers or goods, Africans appeared miraculously from the bush and started to beg. Old men, blind and crippled, were led by small boys. As if to emphasize the gruesome condition of their bodies they offered beautiful animal carvings. The Africans have a golden gift for expressing the power and grace of animals in lively and wonderful carvings from ebony and lighter woods. Passengers could not resist these treasures which were offered for a few shillings. Many carvings must travel to far lands to remind travellers with a conscience of the miserable creatures who carved and sold them.

We arrived at Bulawayo after 2 days, and here the social atmosphere was totally different under British rule. The customs and police were extremely friendly and comfortably smart, and we felt that, despite the good times we had had in South Africa, we had come out of a psychological cloud into sunshine. We trained at the railway employees' club and then took the electric express to Salisbury. This splendid train was the final transition from South African to British. The memories of slow and uncomfortable South African journeys were dispelled as we were whizzed along at about 80 m.p.h.

A reception committee at Salisbury carried banners saying, 'Beware Muleya'. Muleya was the local African champion who was to race with us in the athletics meeting. There had been a storm a week before when a Rhodesian Athletics Association official had ruled that Muleya could not run with us because he was black. But public opinion had forced the Association to overrule the official.

Murray and I had decided that if the ban stayed we would race with Muleya at a meeting run by the Africans if necessary. We felt strongly that even if whites and Africans were to be precluded from living in the same communities (neither party wishes to do this any-

way) it was an outrage to prevent the two races from playing sports together.

Muleya was a quiet, charming fellow and an excellent runner. I met him a couple of days before the meeting and advised him on points about the 3-mile race in which we were both to appear. It was I who suggested he should race with bare feet. He hadn't worn spikes more than once and they would have been a disadvantage to him. Muleya not only won the race but set up a Rhodesian record of 14 min 48·5 s. The crowd of whites and blacks ran across the track in their enthusiasm as he won, and I had to make my way through them to the finish.

Murray Halberg did not do well in the mile and was second to Terry Sullivan who has since run Africa's first four-minute mile. In the space of a few weeks Murray had been reduced from 3 min 57·6 s to 4 min 25 s and was almost on his knees. It was not surprising, for we had travelled 10,000 miles since we left Europe, run many races in terrible heat and tried to keep in constant training.

Our hosts in Salisbury were Pat and Paul Soine, with whom we had struck up a friendship in Sweden in 1957. Their home was cool and comfortable. The native boys did the chores and picked fresh paw-paws for us every morning.

We visited one of Shirley's school friends whose husband was a policeman then on night patrol. She told us she slept with a revolver under her pillow for fear of the natives. They lent us their car, and Murray came with us to see the Kariba Dam. The roads were mostly very new and fast macadam surfaces, but many stretches were still tar strips. Other cars approached us at 60 to 70 m.p.h. on the same two strips. The technique was to drive head on until absolutely the last moment and then swing across to the left so using only one strip each. Cars flashed by at a differential of about 120 m.p.h. or more and you roared along blindly until the cloud of dust and stones cleared.

At one place an eagle was eating the carcass of some animal in the middle of the road as we approached at 85 m.p.h. We expected it to move in good time, but it flew up too late and hit the luggage rack which severed one of its wings. The wing flapped into the air and through the driving mirror I saw a stream of blood on the rear window. I braked quickly and killed the poor unconscious bird with a stamp of my Veldtschoen boots. Its needle-sharp beak stuck into the sole and I had the gruesome task of pulling the body off. I was amazed to

see that its eyes were so huge that they accounted for the greater part of its head, thus giving it fantastic sight. Eagles can be so high in the sky that they are invisible to humans, yet they can see a mouse on the ground.

The dam at Kariba was quite incredible, and the workers' township was a little Italy in the middle of the African bush. When we arrived at 7 p.m. work was going on at a furious pace, and trucks and cars belonging to the Italian contractors rushed about madly. We arrived a week after the dam was sealed to hold back the mighty Zambesi to form a lake which was soon to be as long as from London to Plymouth. The structure was colossal even then, though it was only three-quarters completed. We saw tunnels disappearing into the sides of the gorge. Huge transporters roared out of them with loads of the earth's bowels. Inside were 7 miles of tunnels and the huge chambers for the power station.

Upstream in the valley we parked on a road that had already been cut by the rising lake. In the 15 minutes we were there the watermark on the sloping surface rose appreciably. We reluctantly left this awe-inspiring work of man and drove back to Salisbury.

Next we left by air for the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia, and landed at Lusaka. Here began five helter-skelter days of travelling over hundreds of miles for sight-seeing, parties, lunches and dinners. We were charmed by the hospitality of the British communities, although from an athlete's viewpoint they all seemed to suffer from physical lethargy. We were equally charmed by the vitality, enthusiasm and simplicity of the Africans.

Fifty Africans turned up to train with us at Lusaka. Few of them had ever consciously taken part in athletics before. Nevertheless they ran for an hour or more without complaint. What fantastic champions these fellows will be some day. At the European Club one man turned out to run. He lasted two laps and then retired saying, "I'm not going to kill myself."

An African boy we met in a missionary school was a great long-jumper. He did 24 ft with bare feet, but he sadly explained to us that he could not train, for if he excelled at athletics his fellows 'sent him to Coventry' for getting above himself. The African presents a terrific problem which can only be appreciated by those who live with them. The headmaster of this school told us that the government offered high prices for any agricultural produce the Africans cared to grow.

Equipment was practically given away to influence them to work, but most of the men preferred to live in their mud huts with several wives to do the work while they smoked at home and drank home-brewed beer. In the copper belt the African can earn very good money and is encouraged to gain high positions, but few are interested. They are still tied by their tribal customs.

We returned to Jo'burg and had two full days, meeting again all the friends we had made in the athletics world. Then we waved goodbye for the trip to the airport. There we were interviewed by a South African sports writer. He asked us, among other things, whether we would like to live in South Africa. Murray Halberg pointed to the gun on a nearby policeman's hip and said, "Not on your life—not with all that ironmongery about." Murray also tore off quite a strip about the way natives were put upon and ill-treated in South Africa. This went in the papers as quotes from Gordon Pirie!

You couldn't meet nicer or kinder people than both the British and Afrikaaners of South Africa, and we were grateful for the wonderful welcome they gave us, but this did not blind us to the dreadful oppression which the South African government's officials and police exercise over the Africans. It is a depressing place for all who love freedom.

From Africa Shirley and I, with Murray Halberg, made the flight by plane across the huge Indian Ocean in three great hops. From Jo'burg it was a six-hour flight to Mauritius. Then nine hours to the Cocos Islands, where we drank cocoanut milk by the lagoon at 6 a.m. And finally six more hours and we were over Australia. As soon as we landed we made for the nearest beach and swam until dark. Another plane took us to Sydney where Shirley and I spent Christmas with the Chalwin family and Murray flew on to Auckland to give the diamond ring he bought in South Africa to his future wife.

New Year we spent camping in New Zealand at Goat Island Bay, 40 miles north of Auckland. With the Auckland Underwater Swimming Club I made my first attempts with an aqualung. The others caught sackfuls of crayfish in the clear, warm waters. We cooked and ate them on the beach. In Auckland I worked with Murray in the New Zealand Brewery and had many wonderful outings to surfing beaches, and trips into the interior. Perhaps our most heavenly days were spent sailing in a friend's yacht among the islands in the Pacific.

We anchored in calm blue bays and picnicked on the hot yellow sands, bathing in the warm water when we fancied. Wonderful days of health and sunshine.

These are the things we can't convey in their fullest sense to the English people who incredulously ask us why we want to live in New Zealand. The New Zealanders are English, their way of life is English—and the weather is marvellous. The only regret I shall have in living in New Zealand is that so many friends remain in England.

Running took second place to all the wonderful things we enjoyed so much in New Zealand. I ran in lunch hours round the Auckland Domain. This beautiful park stands on one of the highest parts of the city overlooking the Pacific. It is an undulating expanse of perfect grass surrounded by trees. Many other athletes trained there. Near our suburban home a racecourse made a good training ground. It has a $1\frac{1}{4}$-mile circuit of excellent mushroom-growing turf. I did not know that athletes were not supposed to use it until after 11 a.m. I ran two and a half hours in the early mornings until I was stopped by the groundsman.

We had decided to settle down in New Zealand and were about to buy a house when Russian promoters offered to pay our fares back to Europe. We debated. We were tempted by this opportunity to continue athletics up to the Olympic Games of 1960, and finally we agreed to accept. So Shirley and I packed up once more and paid our fares back to Europe on the promise by the Russians that they would pay us back. But up to now they have still not honoured their promise. We were naturally upset, for we had decided to settle down and the money we spent on our fares would have gone a long way to set us up with a house and furniture. But in the athletic world many promises are made and few are kept. So we are still dreaming of our home in New Zealand and some day I hope to work my passage back there.

Chapter 21

WHY AMERICAN ATHLETES ARE GREAT

We flew round the world back to London via Fiji, Canton Island, Hawaii and the United States. In California I was invited by Hilmar Lodge, Director of Mont San Antonio College, to take part in an athletics meet. I said I would be pleased if I could get the necessary permit from the British authorities. Jack Crump was in the Eastern States with a British team and we contacted him through the American Athletic Union by courtesy of the US telephone system. The call—all-automatic dialling—went 3,000 miles across America to a New York girl operator. I asked her if she could trace Mr Crump at various places where he might be staying. In a few minutes she rang back with Crump on the line and I got my permit. So I ran in a 2-mile race clocking 8 min 59·6 s, which was good after those lush holidays in New Zealand. Before the race I had told the Americans I expected to do 9 min and they were amused at my accuracy. We trained with boys from the local high school and I was told that one boy of 16 had done 13 ft 8 in in the pole vault. They asked me if I thought he had any chance in an athletic career. What a question! Our best English vaulters rarely did such a height.

Shirley and I stayed for a week with the Lodge family in their lovely bungalow among orange groves near Pomona. These oranges, picked straight off the tree, had a striking flavour that made most English imported Californian oranges tasteless by comparison.

Los Angeles is a frightening city, sprawling for miles and miles. We drove all day with John Stone, an old team mate from RAF athletics days, yet never got out of built-up areas. The air was so full of fumes that our eyes smarted and watered. The orange groves were being swallowed up by the suburbs at an appalling rate. Oil wells

were frequent in the Pomona district and the pumps chugged away among the orange trees.

We were given £30 pocket money by the athletic club and thought we were extremely rich, but after a couple of days we had spent nearly all of it on meals. So, though we had other invitations to race, we decided to move on towards Europe. Later we heard that only an hour after we left a promoter rang up and offered to pay our fares from New Zealand and on to London. It makes me cringe to think of losing such an offer!

This generous offer of expenses was a good example of the support athletes can receive in the USA.

American sports scholarships are a great thing for athletes from other countries for they are thus assured of a career when their athletics finish. Such assurance of a future is impossible in many countries where athletes are badly supported or run on a shoe-string budget. But track and field athletes in the States are really a mockery of the sport as we know it. The races are jammed into certain months of the year which may encourage great performances over short distances but does not allow for the training necessary to tackle the mile and upwards. Many of the men who have taken up these scholarships have found themselves overwhelmed by the number of races they have had to face. Laslo Tabori, my great Hungarian friend, who settled down in America after the suppression of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, described American athletics to me as "just a big circus." I have also found American coaches hopelessly ignorant about training methods for middle distances (1 mile to 6 miles). Only men like Igloi, the wonderful Hungarian coach who trains in California, have been responsible for improving the performances of the US distance boys.

The American athletic scene is divorced from the rest of the world. Many of their best experts know nothing of the European tradition of athletics. The reverse is true too. While in California I watched shot-putters achieve 58 ft without applause. They were the also rans. At a high school in Los Angeles a boy of 16 was running the 100 yds in 9·6 s and the 220 m in under 21 s. He was considering giving up athletics in favour of football—American type—because he couldn't make the grade in athletics.

Or take the high jump. Only the other day I read a glowing report about a 6 ft 4 in jump by my friend McKenzie. They didn't even bother with that height to start one competition I watched in America.

"Seven feet won't get you there, boy. Make it 7 ft 4 in. at least," I heard them say to a fellow with ambitions.

With such standards plus unlimited money for sport, no wonder American athletes excel. A promising boy at a US university gets board and lodging, pocket money, all the equipment he needs—the lot free. And if he becomes a champion in America there is plenty of money he can get. Stories of under-the-counter payments have been openly talked about for the last ten years. There was the case of Wes Santee, my opponent in the Emsley Carr mile in 1953. He was professionalized for accepting money. He made the mistake of accepting cheques instead of cash.

To complete the American picture you must mention drugs. Pep pills are a standard treatment before big races and the pressure put on athletes to succeed at all costs makes such abuses almost inevitable. An amusing aspect of American athletics is the childish wars which competitors have to 'out-psycho' each other. Much of it is done for publicity or merely to mislead the opposition. But it is taken very seriously. I remember staying at a hotel in Berne before the last Olympics with Parry O'Brien and Bill Nieder, the American shot-put champions. They were great friends, but they were quoted as saying the most outrageous things about each other. Their exchanges were very amusing to an outsider, and I think they enjoyed them too. They were out to needle each other as much as possible but it was all taken in good part. This big talk before a competition is common among Americans. Mal Whitfield was famous for talking himself into a high state of confidence. The Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* sent round a questionnaire to top athletes asking questions such as "Who do you consider the greatest-ever athlete?" Mal replied that he himself was the greatest athlete of all time. "The only difference between me and Zatopek," he claimed, "is that I run short races and he runs long ones." He was right too. Perhaps he was writing with his tongue in his cheek and pulling the newspaper's leg, for champions are asked a thousand and one nonsensical questions and there is a temptation to give nonsensical answers.

After the Californian sunshine Shirley and I found New York cold and shivery. But we were soon over the Atlantic in a BOAC Britannia for a brief 8 hours' flight to Glasgow. At London Airport, where family and friends met us, it was even colder but it was nice to be home in an

English springtime. We had a brief stay in England during which I ran a 2-mile race at Brighton, beating Martin Hyman and Hugh Foord in a full gale. The cinders were blowing up from the track in our eyes, but despite these atrocious conditions the race was reported as a 'crawl'.

Next Shirley and I travelled to Freiburg to see Gerschler and then on to Norway. In Oslo we lived with friends and I worked in the Christiana Bank from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. In the mornings we swam in the Fjord or ran a little in the pine woods. It was terrifically hot through those summer months of 1959, and it was only possible to train seriously late in the evening. Occasionally I broke off my work in the Bank at 7 p.m. to rush to Bislet Stadium and run a race. After which I rushed back to the Bank and worked until 10 p.m. or, once, to 11 p.m. to make up for lost time. Of course I didn't do well in those races. I didn't expect to under such circumstances. I ran merely to keep my hand in, for I was due to race in a 2-mile event in London on August Bank Holiday. I won that race in 8 min 39 s, the world's fastest time of 1959, covering the last mile in 4 min 15 s to beat all the top British runners. So, the selectors asked me to race 6 miles in the Great Britain *v.* Poland match. I was astonished because I had not run 6 miles for three years. I did not give an immediate answer, but when I returned to Norway I wrote declining the invitation. I pointed out my lack of recent experience at 6 miles and the excellence of other British 6-milers. These were good reasons for declining but overriding them was the fact that I had no money to spare. I could hardly expect to keep my job in Oslo if I took more time off. I should have represented my country and starved afterwards.

I could hardly expect British officials to see this hard-up point of view. Because I declined this match I was dropped from the British teams for the rest of the season. Yet when I returned to London in September I again trounced all British rivals by running the best British time of the year over 3 miles.

That summer of 1959 in Norway was the happiest time Shirley and I have ever had and it was a great tonic to my athletics. Life with our bearded friend Sverre and his faithful Kim was quiet and serene. We spent hours in the solitude of the woods, swam at 1 a.m. on midsummer night and drove over the mountains to Bergen. I grew a beard too, and we really looked a dangerous crew.

At Voss we climbed 6,000 ft to the snows I had looked at in 1953. It took us the whole day. We lived on wild berries, drank water

from the mountain streams and enjoyed the luxury of one slice of rye bread and goats' cheese. The sun shone all day and even at 6,000 ft on the snow-cap Sverre and I wore only a pair of shorts. The toil of the ascent was worth while for at the top we could see the Folgefenna Glacier miles away above the Hardanger Fjord. The lakes at Voss miles below looked like ponds. The silence was unbroken in the mountains except by the murmur of a soft breeze.

The cross-country season started soon after our return to England, but I pulled a muscle which kept me out of circulation until December. Early in December I ran for South London Harriers in the race for the Pierre Lefaucheur Trophy in Paris, but as I had done no training for six weeks, I did badly. In January, 1960, I began training for the summer and arranged to visit Gerschler in Germany three times before the track season. In February and March I ran for my club to boost our team's hopes, although I was not in good form. The club did well, however, coming second in the Southern championships and second in the National, where I qualified for the England team despite my bad state of fitness.

I did not accept the invitation to run in the International championships for, as I pointed out, the English team was strong enough to walk away with the title. My preparations for the summer were uppermost in my mind, and in May I won races in Germany in excellent times and defeated Olympic gold medallist and double European champion, Zidislav Kryzkowiak of Poland. At the Whitsun British Games I ran two phenomenal races beating a number of European aces. World-record holder and the world's third best 1,500-m runner of 1960, Rozsavolgyi, finished behind me over his favourite distance. Nineteen-sixty was my greatest season ever, for I ran my first four-minute mile, my personal best performances for 6 miles and 10,000 m and beat three Olympic gold medallists. My only bad spot was the Olympic Games where, as I have described, I ran as dismally as the other British hopes in middle- and long-distance events. That sad let-down I have fully analysed and I think accounted for. It was all the more distressing for me because in 1960 I was running better than ever and in the big races, apart from the Olympics, I was never really challenged at the tape over my speciality distances.

And now I end my book where I began. It is the record of ten years at the top as an athlete, ten years of hard discipline, of triumphs and of failures. Ten years of running for my life.

APPENDIX

List of Races since 1950

I do not vouch for 100 per cent accuracy in the following statistics, because many have been compiled from memory, but I feel that in their present form they will be an adequate guide to the interested reader:

1950

Date	*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
Jan. 7	Surrey XC (junior)	5th		1st P. Pirie
18	RAF Cranwell *v.* Swinderby XC	1st		2nd E. Harrison
28	North Midland League XC	1st		2nd E. Hardy, Derby
Feb. 15	Sefton Brancker XC	11th		—
22	RAF Area XC	1st		2nd E. Harrison
25	Southern Counties XC (junior)	1st		2nd P. Pirie, 3rd Green
March 3	RAF XC chps.	1st		2nd J. Stone, Dorking
10	National XC (junior)	20th		1st W. Hesketh, 2nd Green
23	Inter-Services XC	4th		1st D. Birch, 2nd E. Harrison
April 1	London–Brighton relay	Fastest leg		—
5	RAF 38 Group XC	1st		2nd E. Ellis
May 20	Pollitt Trophy, Hove, 1 mile	2nd	4m 33·8s	1st J. Hovell
24	SLH 3 miles track chps.	2nd	15m 5·2s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st P. Pirie
June 10	LAC Relays 1 mile		4m 23s	PERSONAL RECORD
21	RAF Transport Command 1 mile	1st	4m 32s	CHAMPIONSHIP RECORD
July 4	RAF 1 mile chps.	1st	4m 20s	PERSONAL RECORD
14	AAA 1 mile chps. (heat)	7th	4m 27s	—
21	Inter-Banks 1 mile chps.	1st	4m 26·8s	2nd R. Morley
25	Inter-Services 1 mile chps.	3rd	4m 19·5s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Chataway
Aug. 2	Sefton Brancker 1 mile	3rd	4m 19·8s	1st L. Eyre, 2nd Parker

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
Sept. 9	Taunton sports 3 mile hcp.	1st	14m 55s	PERSONAL RECORD
22	Surrey road relay (2·94 miles)	6th	14m 12s	fastest, Chataway, 14m 2·6s
Oct. 20	SLH 5 mile XC chps.	1st		COURSE RECORD
Nov. 17	SLH *v.* Blackheath 7½ mile	1st		COURSE RECORD
Dec. 8	Inter-Banks XC chps.	1st		—
	1951			
Jan.	Surrey XC (Junior)	1st		COURSE RECORD
Feb.	Inter-County XC	2nd		1st F. Aaron, 3rd L. Eyre
	Sefton Brancker XC	1st		2nd A. Olney, 3rd L. Eyre
	Southern Counties XC (senior)	1st		2nd F. Sando
March	National XC (junior)	2nd		1st W. Hesketh
April	Festival of Britain XC	1st		2nd C. Walker
	International Military XC	1st		2nd Hermann, 3rd Sando
	London to Brighton relay	Record leg		—
	Pollitt Trophy, Hove, 1 mile	1st		—
May	RAF Group chps. 1 mile	1st	4m 19·8s	CHP. RECORD 2nd P. Robinson
	3 miles	1st	14m 47s	CHP. RECORD 2nd McMinnis
	Surrey chps. 1 mile heat	2nd	4m 17·8s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Parlett
	1 mile final	2nd	4m 15·8s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Parlett
June	Kinnaird Trophy 1 mile	2nd	4m 17·4s	1st Bannister, 3rd Chataway
	Southern 1 mile (heat)	1st		—
	(final)	2nd		1st D. Seaman
	RAF Transport Command 1 mile	1st	4m 18·8s	2nd P. Robinson
June	SLH 3 miles chps.	1st	14m 21·2s	PERSONAL RECORD 2nd P. Pirie
July	RAF chps. 1 mile	1st	4m 15·8s	RAF AND PERSONAL RECORD, 2nd P. Robinson

Date	*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
July	Southampton 1 mile	1st	4m 14·4s	PERSONAL RECORD
	AAA chps. 6 miles	1st	29m 32s	BRITISH RECORD 2nd Hesketh
	AAA chps. 3 miles	4th	14m 12s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st W. Beckett
Aug.	GB *v.* France 6 miles	2nd	29m 33·8s	1st W. Hesketh
	British Games 3 miles	2nd	14m 3s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Slykhuis
	GB *v.* Yugoslavia 10,000 m	1st	31m 8s	PERSONAL RECORD 2nd Mihalic, 3rd Hesketh
	GB *v.* Greece 5,000 m	1st	15m 8·8s	PERSONAL RECORD
Sept.	GB *v.* Turkey 5,000 m	2nd	14m 57·6s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Chataway
	GB *v.* Turkey 10,000 m	1st		—
Nov.	SLH *v.* Blackheath XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
	Criterium des As XC, Brussels	2nd		1st L. Theys, Belgium
Dec.	Inter-Banks XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
	1952			
Jan. 1	Surrey XC (senior)	1st		2nd C. Walker
8	Mezidon International XC	1st		2nd Driss (France)
19	Inter-Counties XC	1st		2nd L. Eyre
Feb. 1	Hannut International XC	2nd		1st Van de Wattyne
23	Southern Counties XC	1st		2nd F. Sando
March 8	National XC	2nd		1st W. Hesketh
April 26	SLH 6 miles chps.	1st	30m 6·8s	CLUB RECORD 2nd P. Pirie
May 4	Jean Bouin Memorial 3,000 m	5th	8m 41·2s	PERSONAL RECORD
7	Leyton floodlit 3,000 m	3rd	8m 28·8s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st L. Eyre, 2nd Paget
May 14	AAA *v.* London Univ. 1,500 m	1st	3m 57·2s	PERSONAL RECORD 2nd Parlett
17	Surrey chps. 3 miles	1st	14m 7·2s	CHAMPIONSHIP RECORD
21	SLH match 1 mile	1st	4m 25s	—

Date		Event	My position	Time	Other details
May	24	Pollitt Trophy, Hove 1 mile	1st	4m 27s	—
		2 miles	1st	9m 7·4s	MEET RECORD
	27	Paddington 1½ mile	3rd	6m 43·8s	1st F. Green, 2nd Paget
	31	British Games 3 miles	1st	13m 44·8s	BRITISH RECORD 2nd F. Sando
June	2	British Games 2 miles	1st	9m 8·6s	2nd C. Stone USA 3rd Paget
	14	Kinnaird Trophy 1 mile	2nd	4m 15·2s	1st J. Disley
	20	AAA chps. 6 miles	1st	28m 55·6s	BRITISH RECORD
	28	AAA team in Glasgow 1 mile	5th	4m 18s	—
July	8	Inter-Banks 1 mile	1st	4m 18s	CHP. RECORD
	12	Vickers Sports 2 miles	1st	8m 53s	BRITISH RECORD
	20	Olympic Games 10,000 m	7th	30m 4·2s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Zatopek
		Olympic Games 5,000 m (heat)	5th	14m 26·2s	PERSONAL RECORD
		Olympic Games 5,000 m (final)	4th	14m 18s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Zatopek
Aug.	4	British Empire *v.* USA 3 miles	2nd	13m 53·8s	1st Cappazoli, USA
	19	Dublin 4 miles	1st	19m 12·8s	PERSONAL RECORD
	23	GB *v.* France 5,000 m	1st	14m 56s	—
Sept.	10	City Charity match 1 mile	2nd	4m 14·4s	=PERSONAL RECORD
		Invitation 1 mile	5th	4m 19·8s	—
	13	Surrey road relay 2·94 miles	Record Lap 13m 26s		
	17	White City floodlit 2,000 m	3rd	5m 21·2s	BRITISH RECORD
	21	Berlin 5,000 m	2nd	14m 29·4s	1st Gude, Germany
Oct.	4	Birmingham 2 miles	1st	9m 6·25s	—
	11	SLH 5 miles XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
Oct.	25	SLH *v.* Surrey AC XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
Nov.	15	SLH *v.* Blackheath XC	1st		COURSE RECORD 2nd Sando
	23	Criterium des As XC	1st		—
Dec.	6	SLH *v.* Royal Navy AC XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
	13	Inter-Banks XC	1st		—

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
	1953			
Jan. 3	Surrey XC	1st		—
	Mezidon International XC	1st		2nd G. Reiff
Feb.	Hannut International XC	1st		—
	Southern Counties XC	1st		2nd Sando
March	National XC	1st		2nd Sando
	International XC	19th		1st Mihalic, 2nd Sando
April 4	London to Brighton relay	Lap record		—
11	Southern 6 miles track chps.	1st	28m 47·4s	BRITISH RECORD 2nd Sando
18	SLH trials ½ mile	3rd	1m 58·3s	PERSONAL RECORD
	SLH trials 1 mile	1st	4m 16·8s	GROUND RECORD
May 2	AAA *v.* Oxford 2 miles	1st	8m 56s	2nd F. Green
6	Leyton floodlit 3 miles	1st	13m 54·8s	GROUND RECORD
10	Tourcoing International 13 km	2nd	8m 21·4s	BRITISH RECORD 1st Reiff
16	Brockman Trophy 1 mile	1st	4m 18·6s	MEET RECORD 2nd F. Green
22	British Games 3 miles	1st	13m 46s	2nd F. Sando
25	British Games 2 miles	2nd	8m 55·6s	1st Chataway
27	Croydon *v.* Arnhem ½ mile	1st	2m 0·6s	—
June 6	Carshalton opening 2 miles	1st	9m 10·4s	—
13	Surrey chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 54·2s	CHP. RECORD
17	Union St. Gilloise 5 km	3rd	14m 18·8s	1st Mimoun, 2nd Reiff
20	Southern chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 41·8s	BRITISH RECORD
July 10	AAA chps. 6 miles	1st	28m 19·4s	WORLD RECORD
11	AAA chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 43·4s	CHP. RECORD
18	Inter-Banks 1 mile	1st	4m 11s	MEETING AND PERSONAL RECORD
July 25	Dublin 4 miles	1st	18m 57s	IRISH RECORD
Aug. 1	GB *v.* France 3 mile	1st	13m 36·4s	BRITISH RECORD
8	Emsley Carr Mile Trophy	1st	4m 6·8s	PERSONAL RECORD
18	SLH *v.* Nørrøna Bergen 1,500 m	1st	3m 53·4s	GROUND RECORD
20	SLH at Voss 3,000 m	1st	8m 11·4s	BRITISH RECORD
22	SLH at Odda 1,500m	1st	3m 52·2s	GROUND RECORD
24	SLH at Notoden 800 m	1st	1m 56s	GROUND RECORD

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
Aug. 25	SLH at Oslo 3,000 m	2nd	8m 1·2s	1st Hermann, Belgium
29	GB *v.* Germany 5,000 m	1st	14m 2·6s	BRITISH RECORDS
	passed 3 miles in 13m 34s			
Sept. 3	GB *v.* Sweden 10 km	1st	29m 17·2s	BRITISH RECORD
5	Oslo International 3 km	1st	8m 11s	BRITISH RECORD
9	City Charity 2 miles	1st	8m 47·8s	BRITISH RECORD
12	Surrey road relay 2·94 miles	Lap Record 13m 25s		
23	London *v.* Stockholm 4×1,500 m relay			WORLD RECORD
30	England *v.* Holland 2 mile	1st	8m 47·4s	BRITISH RECORD
Oct. 3	Birmingham floodlit 4 mile	1st	18m 35·4s	WORLD BEST
Dec. 12	Inter-Banks XC	1st		COURSE RECORD
	1954			
Jan. 2	Surrey XC	1st		2nd P. Driver
Feb. 7	Hannut International XC	1st		2nd Gaston Reiff
March 13	National XC	1st		2nd K. Norris
April 10	London to Brighton relay	Lap record		
May 8	Freiburg International 2,000 m	1st	5m 19·8s	BRITISH RECORD
15	Brockman Trophy ½ mile (heat)	1st	1m 57·6s	PERSONAL RECORD
	Brockman Trophy (final)	3rd	1m 56·6s	PERSONAL RECORD
22	Surrey chps. 1 mile (heat)	1st	4m 20·6s	—
	1 mile (final)	1st	4m 10·6s	CHP. RECORD
29	Sward Trophy 1 mile	3rd		—
June 5	British Games 3 miles	1st	13m 47·4s	2nd Sando
12	Heathfield Trophy ½ mile (heat)	1st	1m 54·6s	MEETING AND PERSONAL RECORD
	½mile (final)	1st	1m 53s	MEETING AND PERSONAL RECORD
	½ mile (Relay)	1st	1m 54·6s	—
19	Lloyds sports 1 mile	1st	4m 5·2s	WORLD RECORD ON GRASS
July 10	AAA 6 mile chps. Unable to finish—Broke bone in foot			
Oct. 13	White City floodlit 2 miles	1st	8m 54·8s	
16	*v.* Russians, Manchester 3 miles	1st	13m 53s	GROUND RECORD
Nov. 13	Christie Club 10,000 m	1st	30m 7·2s	GROUND RECORD
21	Criterium des As XC	1st		2nd Kovacs

Date		*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
		1955			
Jan.	1	Surrey XC 7½ miles	1st		2nd M. Maynard, 3rd Driver
	15	Inter-Counties XC 7½ miles	6th		1st Ken Norris
	23	Mezidon International XC	1st		2nd Driver, 3rd Norris
Feb.	6	Hannut International XC	1st		2nd Sando, 3rd Norris
	19	Southern XC 9 miles	1st		2nd Norris
March	5	National XC 10 miles	1st		2nd Ranger, 3rd Norris
April	23	Southern 6 miles	1st	28m 21·4s	CHP. RECORD 2nd Norris
May	7	Freiburg International 3,000 m	1st	8m 22·4s	GROUND RECORD
	8	Heilbronn International 1 mile	1st	4m 12·4s	GROUND RECORD 2nd Rolf Lamers
	21	Univ. AU Invitation 2,000 m	1st	5m 9·8s	BRITISH RECORD 2nd Ibbotson
	28	British Games 1 mile (heat)	1st	4m 9s	
June	4	Surrey chps. 1 mile (heat)	1st	4m 22s	CHP. RECORD
		(final)	1st	4m 8·6s	2nd Driver 4m 13·6s
	8	AAA *v.* London Univ. 1 mile	1st	4m 6s	GROUND RECORD
	11	Barhlingen International 1,500 m	1st	3m 49·5s	GROUND RECORD
	15	Union St. Gilloise International 2,000 m	1st	5m 12·6s	2nd Tabori, 3rd Iharos
	18	Kinnaird Trophy ½ mile (heat)	1st	1m 54·8s	
		(final)	2nd	1m 53·3s	1st Derek Johnson
	19	Amsterdam Olympic Day 800 m	5th	1m 55s	
		1,500 m	3rd	3m 54·8s	
	22	Manchester Invitation 3 miles	1st	13m 29·8s	PERSONAL RECORD 2nd Driver
July	2	Southgate Invitation ¾ mile	1st	2m 58·2s	
	5	Paddington Invitation 1½ miles	1st	6m 26s	WORLD UNOFFICIAL BEST 2nd Norris
	6	Croydon Invitation 2,000 m	1st	5m 10s	GROUND RECORD

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
July 9	Brockman Trophy 3 miles	1st	14m 16s	MEETING RECORD
13	SLH *v.* Nørrøna 1 mile	1st	4m 17·2s	GROUND RECORD
15	AAA 6 miles	Won and lost		Ken Norris won officially
23	Civil Service Sports 3,000 m	1st	8m 32·4s	GROUND RECORD
Aug 1	Watford Sports 3 miles	1st	14m 24·6s	GROUND RECORD
12	GB *v.* Hungary 6 miles	1st	28m 36s	MATCH RECORD 2nd Norris
20	Toronto 1 mile	3rd	4m 13·2s	1st Santee, 2nd Dwyer
24	Exeter, Ontario, 3 miles	1st	14m 24·6s	GROUND RECORD 2nd P. Pirie
27	Hamilton, Ontario, 2,000 m	1st	5m 18·2s	GROUND RECORD 2nd Dwyer
Sept. 11	GB *v.* Russia 10,000 m	=2nd	29m 46·6s	1st Kuts
14	GB *v.* Czechoslovakia 5,000 m	1st	14m 3·8s	GROUND RECORD 2nd Zatopek, 3rd Norris
15	G.B. *v.* Czechoslovakia 10,000 m	2nd	29m 54·4s	1st Zatopek, 3rd Sando
25	Turku International 10,000 m	1st	29m 32s	2nd Taipale
Oct. 1	Copenhagen International 5,000 m	1st	14m 23·6s	2nd Thorgeson
8	SLH Gibb Cup 5 miles XC	1st	25m 23s	COURSE RECORD
12	London *v.* Prague 10,000 m	1st	29m 19s	BRITISH RECORD 2nd Norris 3rd Zatopek
15	Manchester *v.* Prague 5,000 m	1st	14m 19s	2nd Zatopek, 3rd Sando
22	Road Runners 2 hr Record attempt	2nd		Broke WORLD RECORD for 20 miles and 2 hours, 1st Lancaster
	1956			
March 3	National XC, Warwick	15th		1st K. Norris, 2nd F. Norris, 3rd Ibbotson
May 5	Imber Court ½ mile	1st	1m 59·6s	—
	Imber Court 3 miles	1st	14m 29·4s	—

Date		*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
May	10	Oxford 1 mile	4th	4m 13·2s	1st K.Wood
	19	White City 1,500 m	4th	3m 46·2s	1st K.Wood, 2nd Rozsavolgyi, 3rd Tabori
	21	Did not finish (shoe removed at start of 3,000 m)			
	26	Manchester 3,000 m	1st	8m 9·4s	2nd Ibbotson
	30	Motspur Park 1 mile	1st	4m 4·6s	2nd Evans, London Univ.
June	2	Motspur Park 3 miles	1st	13m 42·2s	SURREY RECORD
	9	Walton 1 mile	1st	4m 3·6s	2nd L. Reed
		Walton 3 miles	1st	13m 45·9s	—
	19	5,000 m	1st	13m 36·8s	WORLD RECORD 2nd V. Kuts, 13m 39·6s
	22	3,000 m	1st	7m 55·5s	WORLD RECORD 2nd Chromik, 7m 56·4s
	24	Amsterdam 1,500 m	1st	3m 43·7s	DUTCH RECORD 2nd Richtenheim
July	4	Croydon 10,000 m	1st	29m 17·2s	= BRITISH RECORD
	28	Croydon 1 mile	1st	4m 2·2s	PERSONAL RECORD
Aug.	15	Croydon 2 miles	1st	8m 42·6s	PERSONAL RECORD
Sept.	4	Malmö 3,000 m	1st	7m 52·8s	WORLD RECORD 2nd Rozsavolgyi 7m 53·4s, 3rd Iharos 8m 6·6s, 4th Tabori 8m 16·4s
	6	Copenhagen 1,500 m	1st	3m 49·2s	2nd Hewson, 3rd G. Nielsen
	12	White City 1,500 m	2nd	3m 43·4s	PERSONAL RECORD 1st Richtenheim 3m 43s, 3rd Chataway 3m 46·4s
	15	1 mile in relay, Hurlingham		4m 8·8s	—
Nov.	3	Sydney, Australia, 1 mile	2nd	4m 12·2s	1st J. Bailey 4m 11·1s
	17	Bendigo, Australia, 2 miles	1st	8m 51·2s	—

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
Nov. 23	Olympic Games 10,000 m	8th	29m 49s	1st V. Kuts 28m 45s. (First 5,000 m in 14m 6·8s as against Olympic 5,000 m record 14m 6·4s by Zatopek)
26	5,000 m (heat)	1st	14m 25·4s	=with Mugosa
28	5,000 m (final)	2nd	13m 50·6s	1st V. Kuts 13m 39·6s, 3rd Ibbotson 13m 54·4s
Dec. 7	Adelaide, South Australia, 1,500 m	1st	3m 45·6s	SOUTH AUSTRALIA RECORD 2nd Clark, 3rd Thomas
9	Melbourne 2 miles	1st	8m 44·6s	AUSTRALIA RECORD
	½ mile in relay	1st	1m 53·5s	
Dec. 15	Melbourne 1,500 m	1st	3m 52·4s	2nd Clark 3m 54·2s
	½ mile in relay	1st	1m 55·6s	
26	Frankston, Australia, 3 miles	1st	14m 12s	2nd G. Warren 14m 16s
	1957			
Jan. 21	Masterton, N.Z. 1 mile	1st	4m 15·8s	—
	Masterton, N.Z. 3 miles	1st	14m 39s	—
26	Palmerston North 1 mile	1st	4m 21·4s	—
	Palmerston North 3 miles	2nd	15m 12s	1st Collins, Masterton
	Palmerston North 1 mile	1st	4m 16·5s	—
29	Dunedin 1 mile	3rd	4m 20s	1st M. Lincoln 4m 1·8s
May 28	Manchester 2 miles	1st	9m 0·4s	2nd G. North, Blackpool
June 8	Harrow 1 mile	1st	4m 18·6s	—
10	Watford 1 mile	1st	4m 15·6s	—
15	Chiswick 3 miles	2nd	14m 24s	1st L. Reed 14m 21·4s

Date		Event	My position	Time	Other details
June	19	White City 2 miles	2nd	8m 47·8s	1st Ibbotson, 3rd L. Reed
	24	Dublin 1 mile	3rd	4m 10·6s	1st Delaney 4m 9·7s, 2nd Hewson 4m 9·8s
		Dublin 3 miles	1st	14m 2·4s	2nd Gilligan, London Univ.
	29	Walton 1 mile	2nd	4m 14s	1st Thorpe 4m 14s
July	2	Paddington 1½ miles	2nd	6m 28·4s	1st Ibbotson 6m 27·6s
	3	Croydon ½ mile	1st	1m 57s	—
		Croydon 3,000 m	2nd	8m 18·4s	1st Ibbotson 8m 17·6s
		Croydon 1 mile	1st	4m 17s	—
	17	Paddington 1,500 m	2nd	3m 53·8s	1st A. Gordon 3m 53·2s
	19	White City 2 miles	2nd	8m 50·8s	1st G. Knight 8m 50s
	20	White City 5,000 m	1st	14m 5·6s	—
July	20	Motspur Park 1 mile	1st	4m 24s	—
Aug.	2	Stockholm 5,000 m	1st	14m 14·2s	—
	4	Ystad, Sweden, 800 m	2nd	1m 54·2s	1st L. Locke, London Univ.
		Ystad, Sweden, 1 mile	1st	3m 51·6s	2nd P. Soine, South Africa
	6	Malmö 1 mile	2nd	4m 5·7s	1st Waern 3m 59·7s
	7	Malmö 5,000 m	1st	14m 18s	—
	9	Motala 3,000 m	1st	8m 18s	—
	13	Aarhus, Denmark, 5,000 m	1st	14m 18s	2nd Thorgeson, Denmark
	23	White City 5,000 m	1st	13m 58·6s	2nd Ibbotson, 3rd Bolotnikov, USSR
	31	Aarlborg, Denmark, 1,500 m	1st	3m 52s	—
Sept.	4	Malmö 1 mile	4th	4m 0·9s	1st Waern 3m 58·5s, 2nd Moens, 3m 58·8s, 3rd Ericson 4m 0·4s

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
Sept. 4	Malmö 5,000 m	1st	14m 13s	2nd A. Lawrence, Australia
6	Warsaw 5,000 m	1st	14m 0·8s	2nd Kryzkowiak, 3rd Zimny
14	Hanover 5,000 m	1st	14m 22·1s	2nd Müller, 3rd Laufer
15	Hanover 10,000 m	2nd	29m 54·4s	1st G. Knight 29m 16·8s
17	Turku 2 miles	2nd	8m 39s	PERSONAL BEST 1st Vuorisalo, 3rd Ibbotson
20	Stockholm 5,000 m	1st	14m 23·8s	2nd A. Lawrence
22	Göteborg 3,000 m	1st	8m 10·4s	2nd A. Lawrence
25	White City 5,000 m	Last	15m 9·2s	1st G. Knight, 2nd Chromik, 3rd Zimny
Dec. 21	Cross-country, Coulsdon, 7½ miles	10th		—
	1958			
Jan. 11	Inter-Counties XC	72nd		1st G. Knight
25	SLH 10 miles XC	1st		—
Feb. 1	SLH XC match	2nd		1st R. Langridge
15	Southern XC	12th		—
March 8	National XC	19th		—
30	La Hulpe XC, Belgium	1st		—
May 17	Pollitt Trophy, Brighton ½ mile	1st	1m 55·9s	
	2 miles	1st	9m 19·8s	2nd Foord
16	Dublin 3 miles	2nd	14m 6·4s	1st D. Ibbotson
	1 mile	7th	4m 15s	
24	British Games ½ mile	11th	1m 54·1s (Interval ½ hr)	
	1 mile	10th	4m 10·6s	
26	British Games 2 miles	1st	8m 46·4s	2nd Szabo 3rd Ibbotson
26	Watford 1 mile	1st	4m 15·3s	2nd Ibbtoson
28	AAA v. London Univ. 2 miles	1st	8m 51·6s (Interval 20m)	2nd P. Clarke
	1 mile	2nd	4m 10·8s	1st Kent-Smith

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
May 31	Surrey chps. 3 miles	1st	1m 54·2s	2nd M. Firth
June 7	Brockman Trophy 1,500 m	1st	3m 55·9s	
8	Amsterdam Olympic Day 3,000 m	1st	8m 21·6s	—
14	Walton-on-Thames 1 mile	1st	4m 4·7s	2nd Disley
21	Southern 3 miles	2nd	13m 43·6s	1st Eldon, 3rd J. Merriman
28	Kinnaird Trophy ½ mile (heat)	1st	1m 55·5s	2nd Rawson
	(final)	4th	1m 57·4s	1st Rawson
July 1	Paddington 1½ miles	2nd	6m 28·4s	1st Eldon
2	Inter-City match, Croydon, 1 mile	1st	4m 9·2s	2nd Sullivan, Rhodesia
5	Southampton 3 miles	1st	13m 57s	2nd Hyman
12	AAA chps. 3 miles	10th	14m 10·8s	1st Eldon
22	Empire Games 3 miles	4th	13m 29·8s	1st Halberg
24	Empire Games 1 mile (heat)	2nd	4m 7·9s	(last ½ mile 1m 55·9s) 1st Elliott
26	Empire Games 1 mile (final)	4th	4m 4·1s	1st Elliott, 2nd Lincoln, 3rd Thomas
29	Paddington 1,500 m	1st	3m 48s	2nd E. Shirley, 3rd Eldon
30	City Charity 2 miles	1st	8m 54·2s	—
Aug. 2	White City 3 miles	3rd	13m 34s	1st Thomas, Australia 2nd Eldon
4	White City 2 miles	2nd	8m 48s	—
4	Watford ½ mile	4th	1m 56·1s	
16	Watford Invitation 1 mile	1st	4m 11·6s	—
21	European chps., Stockholm 5,000 m (heat)	4th	14m 8·8s	—
23	5,000 m (final)	3rd	14m 0·6s	1st Kryzkowiak, Poland, 2nd Zimny, Poland
25	Oslo International 3,000 m steeplechase	2nd	9m 6·6s	—

Date		*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
Aug.	26	Oslo International 1,500 m	5th (Interval 15m)	3m 47·2s	1st Lincoln, Australia
		5,000 m	1st	14m 3s	2nd Jurek, Czechoslovakia
	28	Göteborg International 5,000 m	1st	13m 51·6s	WORLD'S FASTEST 2nd Jurek
	30	Malmö International 1 mile	6th	4m 3·8s	1st Elliott, Australia
Sept.	5	Oslo International 5,000 m	1st	14m 15·4s	2nd Thomas, Australia
Oct.	18	SOUTH AFRICA Middleburg 3 miles	1st	15m 38·5s	—
	22	Paarl 1 mile	1st	4m 24·8s	—
	25	Port Elizabeth 3 miles	1st	15m 5·1s	—
	31	East London 1 mile	1st	4m 27·3s	—
		½ mile	1st	2m 1s	—
Nov.	4	Grahamstown ½ mile	2nd	1m 57·3s	1st McKay, South Africa ½ mile Champion
	15	Johannesburg 1 mile	Last	4m 36s	1st Halberg
	19	Pretoria 3 miles	2nd	14m 33·4s	1st Halberg
	22	Bloemfontein 3 miles	1st	15m 15s	—
	24	Durban 3 miles	1st	14m 30s	NATAL RECORD
Dec.	6	RHODESIA. Salisbury 3 miles	2nd	(No time)	1st Muleya 14m 48·5s
		1959			
April	24	Pomona, California, 2 miles	3rd	8m 59·3s	1st Dellinger, 2nd Coleman
May	16	Watford 10 mile road race	3rd	51m 38s	1st Towel, 2nd Merriman
	23	Pollitt Trophy, Brighton, 2 miles	1st	9m 10·2s	2nd Hyman, 3rd Foord
	31	A village sports 5,000 m	2nd	15m 8·4s	1st X. Hoeger
June	3	Trondheim 3,000 m	1st	8m 20·8s	—
	6	Oslo 5,000 m	3rd	14m 29·8s	1st Jurek
	7	Oslo 3,000 m	1st	8m 10·4s	—
	18	Königsberg 1,500 m	1st	3m 53·3s	—
	30	Oslo 5,000 m	4th	14m 29·4s	—

Date		*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
Aug.	3	London 2 miles	1st	8m 39s	WORLD'S FASTEST 2nd Ibbotson
	10	Skovde, Sweden, 3,000 m	1st	8m 8·7s	—
	21	Karlstad, Sweden, 3,000 m	1st	8m 15·8s	(last ½ mile 1m 59·0s)
	31	Bergen 5,000 m	1st	14m 29·4s	—
Sept.	8	Göteborg 1,500 m	5th	3m 46·4s	—
	9	Göteborg 3,000 m	1st	8m 21·4s	—
	11	Uddevalla 2,000 m	3rd	5m 11·4s	—
	13	Hagfoss 3,000 m	1st	8m 16·4s	—
	15	Stockholm 3,000 m steeplechase	6th	9m 26s	—
	26	Surrey Beagles road relay	Lap record		—
	30	White City 3 miles	1st	13m 25s	2nd Eldon, 3rd Hyman
Oct.	2	Manchester 1 mile	3rd	4m 9·5s	—
Nov.	28	SLH XC match	=1st		—
Dec.	20	SLH in Paris XC	12th		—
		1960			
Jan.	23	SLH 10 miles XC chps.	1st		—
Feb.	13	Southern XC	13th		—
Mar.	12	National XC	7th		—
April	9	London–Brighton relay	2nd	Fastest leg	Handcross
	28	AAA *v.* Oxford 2 miles	3rd	8m 51·6s	1st Ibbotson, 2nd Reed
May	15	Krefeld 3,000 m	1st	8m 4·4s	2nd M. Wiggs, 8m 7·4s
	21	Stuttgart 3,000 m	1st	8m 6·4s	2nd Kryskowiak
	28	Surrey chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 59s	—
June	4	British Games 1,500 m	1st	3m 44·1s	2nd Rozsavolgyi
	6	British Games 3,000 m	1st	7m 57·2s	—
	15	England *v.* Italy 1,500 m	2nd	3m 45·6s	1st Kent-Smith
	18	Brockman Trophy 6 miles	1st	29m 38·6s	—
	25	Southern chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 30·8s	2nd Merriman, 3rd Hyman
July	9	Walton-on-Thames 1 mile	1st	4m 5·7s	2nd M. Wiggs
	15	AAA chps. 6 miles	1st	28m 9·6s	2nd Hyman, 3rd Merriman
Aug.	1	GB *v.* France 5,000 m	1st	13m 51·6s	2nd Salvat, 3rd Bernhard

Date	Event	My position	Time	Other details
Aug. 21	Berne 3,000 m	3rd	8m 17·4s	1st Beatty, 2nd Dellinger
31	Olympic Games 5,000 m	—	14m 43·6s	NON QUALIFIER
Sept. 8	Olympic Games 10,000 m	10th	29m 15·6s	PERSONAL BEST
22	Dublin 3,000 m	2nd	8m 7·2s	1st Thomas, Australia
23	Dublin 1 mile	3rd	3m 59·9s	1st Elliott, 2nd Sullivan
24	Glasgow 3 miles	2nd	13m 49s	1st Thomas
28	London 1 mile	3rd	4m 3s	1st Elliott, 2nd Bernhard
Oct. 1	San Sebastian 5,000 m	1st	14m 4s	2nd Suarez in South American Record
2	San Sebastian 1,500 m	1st	3m 45·3s	2nd Barris
8	SLH 5 mile XC chps.	1st	In record time	
15	England *v.* East Germany 5,000 m	4th	14m 43·6s	1st Janke
22	SLH *v.* Oxford XC	1st	In record time	
Nov. 5	SLH *v.* Cambridge XC	1st	In record time	
Dec. 18	SLH team in Paris XC	5th		TEAM WON
25	Belgrave Harriers, Paarlauf	1st	with H. Paice, Mitcham AC	
31	São Paulo's Farcical road race	38th		1st Suarez
	1961			
Jan. 3	São Paulo 5,000 m	Way back	15m 8s	1st Ferreira
14	Aldershot XC	1st	27m 19s	COURSE RECORD
Feb. 11	Epsom 7½ miles XC	1st	43m 32s	—
18	Southern XC	11th		1st Hyman
25	Epsom 11 miles XC	1st	59m 59s	COURSE RECORD
Mar. 4	Coulsdon 7½ miles XC	1st	44m 1s	—
11	National XC	20th		1st Heatley
April 8	Brighton Relay (last leg)	2nd fastest		—
June 5	Stockholm 3,000 m	1st	8m 13·4s	—
11	Vetlanda 5,000 m	1st	14m 36·6s	—
23	Southern chps. 1 mile (heat)	1st	4m 8·4s	—
24	1 mile (Final)	Spiked after 300 yards		
	3 miles	1st	13m 43·6s	2nd Hill-Cottingham

Date		*Event*	*My position*	*Time*	*Other details*
July	5	Helsinki 5,000 m	2nd	14m 2·2s	1st Halberg 13m 57·2s
	6	1,500 m	9th	3m 51·1s	1st Beatty
	15	AAA chps. 3 miles	1st	13m 31·2s	2nd Hill-Cottingham
	21	GB *v.* U.S.A. 3 miles	1st	13m 16·4s	2nd Tulloh BRITISH RECORD
	24	Oslo 2 miles	1st	8m 44·2s	2nd Wiggs 8m 53s
Aug.	5	GB *v.* Hungary 5,000 m	4th	14m 9s	1st Rozsavolgyi
	7	Skövde 3,000 m	1st	8m 10·1s	—
	10	Dublin 3 miles	1st	13m 31·8s	—
	12	Vesteräs 1,500 m	1st	3m 44·5s	—
		3,000 m	1st	8m 9·4s	—
	15	Lund 1,500 m	2nd	3m 43·4s	1st Waern 3m 42·5s PERSONAL RECORD 3rd Jazy
		5,000 m	1st	14m 7·2s	2nd Bernard
	17	Hasselholm 3,000 m	1st	8m 4·8s	—
	18	Trelleborg 3,000 m	1st	7m 54·8s	2nd Bogey 3rd Bernard
	20	Finland 5,000 m	1st	14m 44·4s	(Flood and gale!)
	25	Boräs 2 miles	1st	8m 42·2s	—
	27	Oxelösund 1,500 m	2nd	3m 50·5s	1st Waern 3m 47·7s
		5,000 m	1st	14m 28·8s	(Half gale!)
	28	Oslo 1500 m	1st	3m 42·5s	2nd Bernard PERSONAL BEST
	30	Eskelstuna 1,500 m	2nd	3m 47·8s	1st Valentin 3m 46·8s
Sept.	1	Stockholm 1 mile	5th	4m 2·8s	1st Waern 3m 58·9s
	9	Surrey Road Relay	Fastest leg	13m 29·4s	—
	13	Göteburg 3,000 m	1st	8m 7s	2nd Roelants 8m 12·2s
	14	Karlstad 3,000 m	1st	8m 17·7s	2nd Suarez
	15	Norrkøping 1,500 m	1st	3m 48·0	TRACK RECORD
Sept.	20	England *v* Russia 5000 m	1st	14m 15·6s	2nd J. Snowden

GORDON PIRIE